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A PARLIAMENTARY crisis of the first magnitude is developing over the Liberal amendment to Clause 20 of the Finance Bill, which will be moved next Tuesday. The Liberals propose that landowners shall be allowed to deduct from their liability under the new land value duty the amount that they have to pay in income tax under Schedule A (i.e., on annual value of the land). This is equity, indeed—for why should a man be taxed twice in respect of the same property? But clearly it would knock the bottom out of Mr. Snowden's tax as a revenue tax, and he can hardly accept it. In fact, it has already been made pretty clear that, if the amendment is carried, the Chancellor will resign. And that would probably mean the resignation of the Government. There has been some suggestion that Mr. Lloyd George will back Mr. Snowden and bring the Liberal Party round; but we are assured that this is illusory. In the circumstances, the cry of "General Election threatened next month" is not mere stunt-mongering. But the hunt for a compromise is going on furiously in both camps.

* * *

Meanwhile, the House of Commons is labouring through the Committee stage of the land tax. Amendments proposing to postpone the date to 1934 or 1936 and to reduce the amount of the tax have been defeated. There was some of the usual nonsense talked by Opposition speakers on Tuesday about the vindictive character of Mr. Snowden's proposals; but mixed with this there were some sound arguments. The tax will press hardly—where we should suppose none but the most fanatical members of the Labour Party want it to press—on a number of institutions which are not run for private profit, such as universities and schools. Sir John Simon drew a fanciful picture of Tom Quad at Christ Church or the Great Court of Trinity, Cambridge, being valued on the basis of their possible use as sites for factories or Americans' houses. But underneath the fancy it is easy to see real ground for fear and complaint. Most, if not all, of the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge will be faced with an annual tax running into many hundreds, and often thousands, of pounds on their own sites and the property they own. And that will mean that they must reduce their expenditure on scholarships and education in general. Surely all genuinely public educational bodies are proper subjects for exemption.

* * *

Although diplomatic relations have now been resumed between the Vatican and the Italian Government, the bitterness provoked by the recent incidents arising out of the anti-Catholic riots and the alleged insults to the Pontiff will not be easily removed. For the moment there is a desire for peace in both camps. That is the most that one can say. The Italian Government has answered the three Papal notes of protest, and its reply

is probably as conciliatory as the Fascist mentality permits. In Fascist circles there is a strong impression that the Vatican has won a cheap sympathy by exaggerating its account of the recent transactions. The Fascists, however, are embarrassed by the imposing number of protests they have received from Catholics abroad, and, having shown their claws, are now prepared to draw them in. The Vatican, on its side, has already soothed the less violent section of Fascist opinion by placing the Catholic clubs under the supervision of bishops—a measure which is regarded as a guarantee that in future they will be conducted on a purely religious basis. There will, therefore, be no immediate return of the Pope to exile or to isolation. It is, however, difficult to believe that this peace can be of permanent duration. There is too much in Fascist theory, and still more in Fascist methods, which is repugnant to Catholics. There is much in the Vatican's conception of Catholic education which is anathema to the Fascists.

* * *

The Spanish Government have for the moment got their ship into smoother waters. The peseta has improved in the exchanges; attacks on churches and religious houses have ceased; freedom of the press has been restored with the removal of the ban on the Monarchist paper, *A.B.C.* There is, however, a good deal of agitation up and down the country. The Syndicalist Trade Unions are particularly active, and in several places, notably in the Asturias coalfields, they are at loggerheads with the Socialists. There is little doubt that labour unrest will bulk large among the difficulties of the young Republic. Another, which may be even more serious, is Separatism. The four provinces of Galicia have now followed Catalonia and the Basques in demanding autonomy. But the "Galician State," we understand, does not aspire to an army or a navy or a currency of its own—which is, perhaps, just as well, as its total population is not much over 2,000,000. We hope that the Separatists, whether in Catalonia or elsewhere, are not going to be intransigent. A generous measure of provincial home rule is obviously necessary; but the "balkanisation" of the Peninsula would produce infinite complications, political and economic, and might easily wreck the Spanish Republic.

* * *

The report on the Cawnpore riots of March is at once a very grave and a highly illuminating document. It does one useful thing in correcting the wild casualty figures to which the Indian press gave circulation. The Committee comes to the conclusion that the number of the killed cannot have exceeded 500. This, to be sure, is terrible enough, but it is nothing like the total of which rumour had spoken. The worst pages of the report are those dealing with the failure of the Cawnpore police and the action of the district officer, Mr. Sale, who is censured in careful but severe terms for hesitation and lack of judgment. It is admitted that for some years past the police establishment of Cawnpore had been maintained on an inadequate basis, and the Governor of the United Provinces, in Council, makes some deliberate comments on the attitude and conduct of the police during the disturbances which cannot fail to be taken in India to mean that there was a definite failure to grapple with the actual disorder. The report makes it perfectly clear that the trouble was communal from beginning to end, and not in any sense an attack upon British authority. It stands as the sharpest and bitterest exhibition of religious and racial passion in India for many years past.

* * *

The Soviet Government has appointed a committee with instructions to draw up in outline a second Five Years' Plan for Russian industry. The present Five Years' Plan has, indeed, two years still to complete; but the Soviet authorities are well aware, on the basis of past experience, that even a Government which has control of the national industries cannot make plans effectively in a hurry. It was always intended that the first Five Years' Plan should be followed up by a second. For the first five years attention was concentrated mainly on the heavy industries producing capital goods, and far less emphasis was placed on the development of industries directly serving the consumer. It was hoped in this way so to increase production power as to make possible, in the second five years, a great advance in the output of consumption goods, and a corresponding rise in the standard of life. Reports of the progress made under the first Plan, especially during the past few months, are very conflicting; and no one expects that the Russians will accomplish the whole of the immense task which they set before themselves. But the Plan may well succeed, even if it falls a good deal short of full realisation; and the measure of its success will be Russia's ability to apply more of her energies, in the second five years, to direct improvement in the standard of life. The proposals of the new committee will, therefore, be eagerly awaited, both in Russia and elsewhere; for the planning idea has laid hold on the minds of many people who are far from being Communists. When shall we have a Five Years' Plan for Great Britain?

* * *

Mr. Montagu Norman this week addressed a private meeting of Labour Members of Parliament, and answered a great many questions in the subsequent discussion. But no report was issued; and those present were warned in advance that they must not quote outside anything that Mr. Norman or his colleagues said. Is all this secrecy really necessary or advantageous? It is indeed something to have got Mr. Norman to address a meeting at all; and we should have no objection to a secret meeting if in other ways the public were given adequate information about the actions and motives of the Bank of England. But this is not the position. The Bank still pursues its traditional policy of silence and mystery, with the result of making City and business opinion a great deal more jumpy and temperamental than they need be if they were kept more fully informed about financial facts and the trends of banking opinion. Let us hope that Mr. Norman's private appearance is at least a sign of grace, and that before long he will be appearing publicly and telling all the world some, at least, of his thoughts. We do not know what Mr. Norman said; but we doubt if the publication of most of it could have done anything but good.

The annual meeting of the King Edward's Hospital Fund, which is concerned with all the London hospitals, throws new light on the position of these bodies. This year £266,000 is available for distribution, as compared with £250,000 a year ago. But while the distributable income is keeping up—a gratifying fact in the face of continued depression—the number of hospitals confronted with an annual deficit is steadily increasing. And as the Prince of Wales remarked in his speech from the chair, "this increase in the number of deficits is a serious fact." The problem of hospital finance, which can only be solved in the long run by public control, is indissociable, in many minds, from the quite separate problem of the legalisation of sweepstakes. While London hospitals (and indeed those of Britain generally) are at their wits' end to tap new resources, the hospitals of the Free State are at a loss to spend profitably the toll which they levy on British speculators. At the same time, the hospital authorities rightly object to being made a stalking-horse for the legalisation of gambling. If gambling is to be legalised—and the Government ought, without further delay, to face up to this problem—it must be legalised on its merits; but the welfare of the sick must not be made dependent on the adventitious fortunes of lotteries. Æsculapius and Fortuna have nothing whatever in common.

* * *

Mr. Geoffrey Mander, the enterprising member for East Wolverhampton, secured on Monday a first reading, under the "ten minutes rule," of his Domestic Servants (Regulation) Bill. The Bill, though drafted independently of the Labour Women's Blackpool resolutions, is on very similar lines; its object is to promote a general acceptance of the standards of employment which decent employers recognise. The machinery proposed—a Commission of five members, with representative advisory councils—would be more effective than that of a Joint Industrial Council and more flexible than that of a Trade Board. It would enable pressure to be brought to bear, where pressure is needed, while avoiding that rigidity of technique which renders bureaucracy unpopular. Proposals to better the lot of the domestic servant—and, incidentally, to make service more acceptable as a career—are apt to be dismissed with contempt in the atmosphere of cultured nescience that hangs like a blight over our suburbs. In London, of course, demand exceeds supply and domestic servants make good terms for themselves. But a recent inquiry into the situation in the North-East of England shows that servants can still be employed in wretched conditions and at an almost incredibly low wage.

* * *

The great scientist called upon to deliver himself in public on a general theme is apt to make a fool of himself. But few manage it so completely as did Sir Arthur Keith in his Rectorial Address at Aberdeen. It is bright but scarcely scientific to compare the different races—and what is a race?—to football teams wearing coloured skins instead of transferable jerseys. And what of a scientist who draws conclusions from this kind of picture about the eternally competitive spirit of humanity? More comic still, to justify war as "nature's pruning hook" by which she keeps "her human orchard healthy"? No doubt the diseases we seem to notice in the human orchard to-day are due to a lack of war. As a pruning hook war is about as efficient as a hailstorm—indeed, less so, because it takes the best and leaves the worst. As if civilisation did not consist in attempting to direct "natural development" by human reason. But really this babyish misapplication of misunderstood Darwinism sounds pathetic in the twentieth century.

* * *

Cricket history was made last week, when Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, finding the time available for their match reduced to a single day, eliminated one innings by the simple process of declaring in turn after each side had scored four byes. The match was thus brought to a definite conclusion and the winners scored their full 15 points. This dashing experiment has been, and will continue to be, the subject of much controversy. To the votaries of "brighter cricket" it appears as a sporting attempt to circumvent the malevolence of the weather; to sticklers for etiquette and tradition as a frivolous leg-pull, inconsistent with the decencies of the game. To us, it seems to be no more than a straightforward application of common sense. The scale of championship points is this year so framed as to put a heavy premium upon the definite conclusion of a match. A certain first-innings tie, with the chance of victory added, is thus worth far more, a priori, than the chance of a first-innings lead. We compliment the captains of Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, not only on their sportsmanship, but on their very definite sense of mathematical realities. Cricket legislation must follow the path of their unassailable logic.

The University term is nearly over, and we have had inquiries from men and women who take their degrees this summer whether "residence" is necessary for those who wish to enter for the prizes in connection with our University Supplement. Residence is not necessary. All men and women who are or have been at a British University and who are not more than twenty-six years of age on October 1st, 1931, and who are not members of the teaching staff are eligible. We offer four prizes of 10 guineas each for:

(*a*) An article of not more than 1,700 words suitable for a "leader" in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

(*b*) An original contribution of not more than 2,000 words of a descriptive or imaginative kind—a short story, sketch or essay.

(*c*) A piece of critical writing, which can treat of any literary, artistic or scientific topic. Maximum length, 1,700 words.

(*d*) A poem, which can be as short as it likes, but which must not exceed 60 lines.

Contributions which seem worthy of publication, but which are crowded out of the Supplement, will be published in subsequent numbers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and paid for at our usual rates. All contributions should reach us by the end of October.

GREGORY POWDER

THE report of Judge Gregory and his colleagues on unemployment insurance makes "the dole" the principal question of domestic politics. An attempt is being made to present the issue as a test of the Government's courage, to suggest that everyone really knows that this particular powder is the remedy for our social sickness and that the only question is whether we shall have the pluck to swallow it. A lot is being said about "the wholesale bribery of the electorate" and the courage needed to tell poor people that it is one's unpleasant duty, for the sake of the national health, to make them poorer still.

Now of course it is true that one of the defects of democracy is that representatives are too often frightened of losing their seats to be honest, and everyone must feel sorry for Members of Parliament who really believe in reducing wages and cutting the dole. It is no easy task for a well-to-do person to go down to an industrial constituency and solicit the votes of wage-earners and dole-gatherers on the ground that, if he is returned to Parliament, he will do his best to reduce still further their standard of living. It needs courage, or perhaps we should say "nerve." But Labour Members are not in this unfortunate position. They have never held that national health could rest on the basis of an under-nourished proletariat. On the contrary, they have asserted—in our view rightly—that the community must be responsible for keeping the workless at a decent standard of living, that one of the main reasons for the comparative prosperity of this country—and compared to most other countries we are prosperous—is that the purchasing power of the mass of the people has not been diminished. They have argued that social equality is a good thing, and that if we are forced to reduce expenditure we might begin by cutting down unnecessary luxuries like armaments. Indeed, it is part of their philosophy that we ought to cut anything—even salaries or the dividends of bondholders, who have done very well since the war—before we attack the livelihood of the poorest section of the community.

We do not suggest that the Government's problem is at all simple. Indeed, it has put itself in a nasty hole by postponing an inevitable decision and appointing a committee which was bound to provide its adversaries with an ugly weapon. Nor do we pretend that the financial situation, which led to the appointment of this Commission, can safely be left as it is. The finances of the unemployment fund are bad if only because they are dishonest. Of course, all this talk about making the fund "actuarially sound" is sheer rubbish. The insurance element is now in any case comparatively small—is it sound if the Government contributes nothing, or a third, or a half? In these circumstances soundness is an entirely arbitrary conception. But it is a bad thing to accumulate a large unfunded debt. It is not good for our morals at home or reputation abroad to go on spending money without budgeting for it, or deciding whether it is really the amount we want to spend or not. The House of Commons has never yet had to decide how much it wishes to spend on the unemployed, and that, we suggest, is what it should do when the Government asks for new borrowing powers. If it had ever faced that question, if it had been forced to meet the expenditure as well as to permit the money to be raised, perhaps we should have made a greater effort to use the unemployed for constructive work. So far it has always been easier simply to vote new money to keep them in idleness.

The recommendations of the Commission are that certain anomalies and abuses—which have proved on examination fewer than were generally expected—should be removed; that contributions should be increased; that benefits should be reduced; and that the period of benefit and the conditions for receipt of transitional benefit should be revised. As regards the first there is no serious difference of opinion even between the majority and minority reports of the Commission. Their proposals would do something to lessen the evils attached to arrangements made by employers and Trade Unions, by which, in effect, wages are subsidised out of the fund and whole industries are kept going on an inefficient semi-casual basis. As regards the position of married women, Mrs. Rackham is probably right in saying that injustice will be done if all married women are segregated and treated as a separate and uniform class. But on this point it should not be difficult to devise a compromise, and the sooner abuses are removed the better.

Nor is there any real objection to some increase in contributions. The contributions will remain, even when raised as the report suggests, much lower than those already in force under the German system. The proposed increases will be some help to the financial situation, and will make no very serious difference to workers or employers.

The real trouble arises, of course, over the proposals to reduce benefit and to make it harder to get. Here we have a direct choice. It is specious to argue that, since the cost of living has fallen, it is reasonable to reduce benefits. This argument ignores the facts that benefit was admittedly too low before to provide reasonable subsistence, and that in distressed areas the prolonged slump has largely exhausted the other resources with which the unemployed used to eke out their incomes. When the furniture has all been sold or pawned, insurance, transitional benefit, or the Public Assistance Committees are all that is left. There is some case in certain parts of the country for tightening up the conditions of receiving transitional benefit, but the Commission goes much too far in the direction of disqualifying applicants and attempting to relieve the fund by confronting men with the choice of going to the Public Assistance Committees or begging in the streets. In all the depressed areas this would merely mean thrusting a larger part of the cost of unemployment back upon the local rates. In any case, the really substantial saving to the fund looked for by the Commission would come from reducing the standard of living of the unemployed, whether by reducing benefit or by refusing it to many who need it. Both methods seem to us equally contemptible; they are methods by

which the well-to-do hope to save their pockets at the expense of the poorest.

What, then, should the Government do? It can immediately remedy the abuses, increase contributions on the lines suggested by the report, and inform the House of Commons that it intends to find a straightforward way of meeting the remaining burden. Why not, for instance, call for a special levy for the unemployed, arranged to meet the estimated cost? In the case of rates we are familiar enough with a detailed statement of the way in which our money is used for this and that purpose. How many income-tax payers would really prefer that the unemployed should lose 2s. a week rather than that they should pay a definite extra amount for their relief? We doubt if it would be very many. People are naturally frightened by the feeling that there is an increasing unfunded debt of indefinite proportions, and by the thought that it may be unsatisfactorily administered. But if they were assured that the abuses and anomalies were remedied, most of them would be willing and able to pay more for the relief of unemployment.

Of course, this is not a satisfactory solution. None is possible while we maintain an army of unemployed. It is grossly uneconomic to spend two million pounds a week on unemployment with nothing to show for it save the maintenance of the unemployed at a barely tolerable level of subsistence. But it must not be forgotten that we are spending well over six millions a week on the National Debt, or that a reduction in our payment to the unemployed may be highly uneconomic if it causes bitterness of spirit as well as a further deterioration of productive efficiency for the future. Call it insurance against revolution, if you will, and cheap at the price. In any case, despite all our expenditure, we are weathering the storm much better than Germany or the United States. People sometimes talk as if we should break down under the financial strain of maintaining the unemployed. But most of them know, in their hearts, even while they speak, that they are talking nonsense.

The really destructive thing is the existence of the unemployed, not their cost. The great evils are that a generation should grow up to feel that society has no use for their services, and that we should remain impotent before the problem of reorganising our economic system. We have become half Socialist; the State has accepted the duty of maintenance without at the same time undertaking the correlative duty of exacting economic service from those whom it maintains. In his Preface to the recent edition of *Fabian Essays* Mr. Bernard Shaw remarks that the sensible thing to do as a result of modern methods of production would be to decrease everyone's hours of labour, and raise everyone's standard of life, but that when we are merely using it to add

> an army of unemployed to the leisured rich and thus burning the candle at both ends, the reform of distribution has become a matter of life and death to civilisation.

Mr. Shaw is, as usual, only calling attention to the obvious. And, as usual, we shall doubtless wait till our embarrassments have become disasters before we listen to him.

THE EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE

THOSE who expected immediate, sensational, or decisive results from the conversations at Chequers were disappointed by the Foreign Office statement issued last Sunday. This official masterpiece told us that there was a luncheon, and who the lunchers were, and that they talked seriously on the matters on which they obviously would talk. The French Press was, on the whole, relieved. It had guessed itself hoarse about moratoriums, revisions of the Young Plan, and international loans. There was unconcealed suspicion in Paris of German trickery, and hardly concealed fear of British weakness. But as it turned out there was no cause for alarm. They lunched and they talked, but nothing of importance happened. Those who look below the surface will not agree with any such facile conclusion. The visit of the German Chancellor and Foreign Minister—which is to be returned shortly by Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Henderson in Berlin—was in itself important, important things were said at Chequers, and important results, we believe, will follow.

The entertainment of the German Ministers was not merely a friendly gesture. It was a peculiar recognition of the need for close and active co-operation in getting Germany out of the mess that she—and the rest of us—are in. And, more than that, it was a means of bringing home to the British public and to the world at large what Downing Street, of course, knew without going to Chequers. Germany is on the edge of the precipice. She has struggled loyally to pay her reparations, and she has succeeded only at the cost of intensifying the strain and the hardships of the general economic depression. The German unemployment figures have risen in the last eighteen months from a million and a quarter to something like four millions. Such public relief as can be afforded scarcely provides the workless with a subsistence dole. The wages of those in work have been drastically cut, and so have the salaries of the middle classes. The price of bread is high. Taxes press heavily, if unevenly, on all. The Reich budget deficit is in the neighbourhood of £28,000,000, the unemployment insurance fund deficit is £20,000,000, and another £20,000,000 and more is wanted for the special Relief fund and employment schemes. And now, simultaneously with the Chequers visit, the Government has announced a new batch of burdens—a desperate remedy for a desperate situation. The most formidable of these is a "crisis tax," graded according to classes. Farmers and landowners come off most lightly. Employers, professional men and those with independent incomes are much harder hit, and wage-earners and salaried employees hardest of all. The political effects of all this are plain enough in the growth of Hitlerism and Communism. The Nazis and the "Reds" need no recruiting sergeants; the general despair and rage are sweeping the country into their ranks. Social Democracy remains the one solid support of the Brüning Government and the Republic—and its support, so far as the Government is concerned, at least, is not too solid. The Social Democratic Party is wrathful over the new emergency measures.

It is true that we in this country are also in economic straits, and it is not likely that Dr. Brüning and Herr Curtius were under any illusion about it. They did not come to England with the hope of persuading us to toss them half-crowns in the shape of unilateral concessions in the matter of reparation payments. But concessions there will have to be, and in the last resort they can only come from America. At the moment, unhappily, there is not much sign that American eyes are open to the extreme peril that threatens Europe—or, at any rate, to the part which the

United States might play in averting the peril. Mr. Stimson, the Secretary of State, and Mr. Mellon, Secretary to the Treasury, are both coming over "unofficially," but we are warned against building hopes on their visit. President Hoover, we are told, has not changed his mind about war debts and reparations. He still thinks the United States has been a generous creditor, and that any further generosity would mean a loss to America without a real gain to anyone else, for the cancellation of war debts would merely give the European Governments so much more to spend on armaments. There is evidently some ground for the suspicions which Mr. Hoover and the many Americans who think with him entertain of the European members of the League of Nations—and to say the truth, which the European members of the League of Nations entertain of each other. But may not war and the warlike spirit be promoted by tightness as well as by superabundance of funds? The poverty of Germany is, in fact, fomenting militarism in the Reich. The bellicosity of Herr Hitler and his rapidly growing host has its comic side, no doubt. But it does not make the French laugh; it strengthens their belief in armaments to meet the danger that looms across the Rhine. The collapse of Germany, civil war, a dictatorship, or even a Government of the extreme Right, would bring no relief either to Germany or to the rest of us. It would pretty certainly smash the Disarmament Conference to smithereens, and it would make the "tribute" harder and not easier to exact. One of Herr Hitler's chief henchmen in a speech a day or two ago made some significant comments on the new emergency taxes. The Nazis, he said, had no intention of carrying out promises given by the present rulers of the country. Let them borrow as much as they like; their successors will pay nothing back. Vain talk? Perhaps—but perhaps not. Germany is on the edge of the precipice, and if she goes over, the result will not be merely the disappearance of Dr. Brüning.

It seems more than a possibility now that the German Government will decide on a moratorium. They are entitled under The Hague Agreement to give notice of their intention to suspend the transfer of annuities, and this would, of course, bring matters to a head. The Advisory Committee of the Bank of International Settlements must then consider the measures which should be taken in regard to the application of the Young Plan." Is there any sane measure that can be taken short of a drastic revision of the Young Plan? And is there, in the last analysis, any sense in the whole scheme of payments which the Young Plan embodies? We cannot imagine that even the *Daily Mail's* readers will be deceived by the fatuous suggestion it made the other day, that "if there were no reparations paid, Germany would be placed on velvet." The war debts and reparations are a curse, economically and politically. In Europe they have long ceased to connote justice or retribution—if indeed they ever did so—either to payers or receivers. They have inflicted more hardship or misery on the innocent than on the guilty; they have bred bad blood between nation and nation, and they will go on breeding it. America alone profits—or seems to profit. But her profit is doubtful now, and presently she is likely to find it a calamity. America cannot afford to see Europe go to pieces, and Europe will go to pieces if Germany goes to pieces. Mr. Stimson and Mr. Mellon may realise that when they come over, and may persuade Mr. Hoover and the rest of their countrymen of it when they return. But if America remains uninterested, Europe—which for this purpose means Great Britain and Germany and France, however reluctant France may be in the matter—will have to concert its own measures for getting rid of the incubus of the Young Plan.

CANADA IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION

This article from a Canadian correspondent was written before the decision was taken to postpone the Ottawa Conference. As the reader will see, it suggests some other very good reasons, besides the inability of Australia and New Zealand to attend, why we should not regret the postponement.—ED. *N. S. and N.*

WHEN Mr. Bennett was elected last July it was on a promise that he would relieve our economic distress, end unemployment, and blast a way for our goods into foreign markets. To-day all the indices of business conditions show that we are in a worse position than we were last summer; and the Government is now having recourse to the last expedient of politicians in a hole, that of denouncing its critics for their lack of patriotism in giving to the world such dismal pictures of our economic conditions.

Of course, it is not fair to blame the Government for all our troubles. Canada sows to wheat 25 million acres each year, and is exploiting her forest and mineral resources on a scale far beyond the consuming capacity of her 10 million people. She must sell her primary products in world markets, and is therefore directly dependent on world conditions. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 1930, our exports of domestic produce had a value of $1,120,000,000; for that ending March 31, 1931, their value had sunk to $800,000,000. Mr. Bennett is still talking, in the latest Speech from the Throne, of "furnishing our people with all possible safeguards against a recurrence of the present subordination to world forces." Opposition papers point out that, since he started to do this by raising the tariff last autumn, twenty-three different countries, whether by coincidence or not, have raised their tariffs against goods which Canada has been in the habit of selling to them. Until we can sell our wheat, our livestock and dairy products, our pulp and paper, our minerals, at prices which are profitable to the producers, there is no prospect of a return to prosperity in Canada. Up to date the tariff has not proved to be good blasting powder!

In the meantime the depression has brought about all sorts of strange happenings. The C.P.R. has halved its dividend. The United Farmers of Saskatchewan have come out for nationalisation of land. Mr. Bennett has announced his conversion to unemployment insurance.

The part of the country which is suffering most is naturally the wheat-growing Prairie. It costs 36 cents for transporting and handling a bushel of wheat between a country point in Saskatchewan and Liverpool; and there seems to be general agreement that, when this sum is deducted from the current Liverpool price, the average farmer does not get enough to pay him for his expenses of production. In essence the complaint of the West is that, while the prices of grain and livestock have fallen precipitously, the prices of the manufactured goods that the farmer has to buy still remain near the 1929 level. Between March, 1930, and March, 1931, the price of grains fell 52% and that of livestock 26%. In the same period the price of textile fabrics fell only 9%, that of knit goods 6%, that of wool hosiery 7%, of cloth 12%, of boots and shoes 2%, of wire 5%, of hardware nil. The articles mentioned, it will be noticed, are such as we might buy from England, but they were all included in Mr. Bennett's tariff increases last September. Mr. Bennett promised that his increases would not raise the price of manufactured goods; but to prevent the price from falling comes to just the same thing.

In the West itself the severity of the depression has

produced a confusion of movements, political and economic. There has been talk of secession from the protectionist East, and demands are being made that Fort Churchill on Hudson Bay become a free port through which the Prairie can import British manufactures. More significant is the volume of criticism that has poured forth against the banks and against the general currency and credit policy of the country. Even Mr. Bennett's Minister of Agriculture (who comes from Saskatchewan) has publicly complained that the banks are unfairly restricting credits to the Western farmer and refusing to assist him in financing his 1931 operations. The banks have denied this; and it is pointed out that banks, mortgage companies, farm implement companies and gasoline companies are carrying millions of dollars on their books as loans to farmers for the repayment of which they are not pressing. Certainly the crisis has raised more hard feeling between the debtor West and the creditor East than ever before in our history. Sooner or later we shall have to face the problem of providing Western agriculture with credit institutions which are more adaptable to its needs than those with which the country is at present equipped.

The immediate problem is how the 1931 wheat crop is to be marketed. It is probable that the Canadian carry-over of wheat at the end of the present crop year (July 31) will be larger than ever before. The Pool, which handles about half of the crop, was hard hit by the crash in the price of the 1929 crop, because it had paid its members a higher initial price per bushel ($1.00) than it was able to realise on its later sales; the deficit which it owes to the banks who financed it has had to be taken over by the three provincial Governments. With the continued low price for the 1930 crop, it was threatened with having to dump its wheat in order to meet bank advances, and was this time saved by the Dominion Government, which stepped in and guaranteed the banks against loss. Now it faces a third year of disastrously low prices. Mr. Bennett has emphatically refused to peg the price of wheat above world levels as the American Farm Board attempted to do. In Saskatchewan provincial legislation to provide for a 100% compulsory Pool to market all wheat grown in the province has been declared *ultra vires* by the courts; the two other provinces refused to join Saskatchewan in this experiment. Finally a week ago all three provincial Premiers, together with the leaders of the farm organisations in the three provinces, joined in requesting Mr. Bennett, if the price of wheat does not rise appreciably this month, to set up a Dominion Government Wheat Board to market the whole Canadian crop for 1931. In the meantime the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, which regards the present crisis as a heaven-sent opportunity for smashing the Pool, is trying to get the marketing of wheat back into the hands of private business, where it belonged before the growers intruded upon the scene with their Pool organisation in 1924. What Mr. Bennett will do in the midst of this conflict remains to be seen.

Since Mr. Bennett came back from London we have heard little from the Government about its plans for increasing Imperial trade. To anyone who has watched the activities of Mr. Bennett during the last few months, nothing could be more pathetic than the simple faith of men like Mr. Baldwin that in return for some quota arrangement on wheat Canada will open her markets to British manufacturers. In the first place, when 20% of the British market has been reserved for home-grown wheat, no proportion of the remaining 80% which can conceivably be allotted to Canada will absorb enough of our exportable surplus in a normal year to solve our marketing problem for us. We should still have a big surplus left which we should have to sell in European markets in competition with the Argentinian, American and Russian wheat that had been shut out of Britain. And the price we received for our whole crop would be closely related to the price at which that surplus was sold in world markets. So that Mr. Baldwin has nothing very much to offer us.

In the second place, the idea of Empire rationalisation has no roots in Canada at all. The dreams of those enthusiasts who think they can make a bargain by which British manufacturers will be guaranteed a permanent share of the Canadian market in certain commodities might as well be dismissed at once as purely fantastic. The only manufacturers in whom Mr. Bennett is interested are those who set up factories in Canada. If there are still some British manufacturers whose products have a comparatively free market in Canada, that is only because Mr. Bennett has not yet found some ambitious Canadian who will promise to make the goods in Canada if given sufficient protection. We have recently had envoys from the British iron and steel interests who have been suggesting some arrangement by which they and the Canadian iron and steel people might share the Canadian market equitably, and so shut out American competition. But the American competitor is already on the spot. United States Steel has been developing a plant at Ojibway which has already received some tariff favours and, unless rumour is greatly mistaken, is to receive more this session. If British concerns want a permanent place in the Canadian market they will have to locate here also. As Mr. Bennett used to remind us in the last election, a factory in Canada is as useful to the Empire as one in Lancashire. "Canada First" and "Empire Rationalisation" have simply no common ground for discussion at all.

This being so, the Ottawa Conference can only result in a fiasco as did the London one. It is likely to have even worse results. For Mr. Bennett is in an ugly temper just now as the result of the continued failure of his Government to deal effectively with the current depression. He badly needs a scapegoat. If a Labour delegation comes from Britain to Ottawa this summer it will find itself in a very unpleasant position. A well-organised and unscrupulous propaganda will hold it up day after day to the Canadian people as the one obstacle that stands in the way of their prosperity and the Empire's unity. In order to protect its own reputation it will have to reply to this campaign not merely in the private discussions of the Conference, but in public. And the result will be an open quarrel between the two Governments. The highest Imperial interests will be served this summer if everybody stays at home, and if we in Canada are left to deal with Mr. Bennett as best we can.

F. H. U.

Toronto. May 21st.

THE EARTHQUAKE

I SPENT Saturday night in a small hotel not many miles distant from one of the older universities. It was a peaceful little hotel that fell quietly asleep in the darkness as soon as the voices of the last birds and the last beer-drinkers had faded into silence. Weary as a result of unaccustomed exposure to the air, I fell under the soporific influence of the place, went early to bed, and was asleep before midnight. Suddenly, between twelve and one, I was awakened by a crash. The house shook as though a football team were tumbling over the furniture in the rooms below. A gramophone began to whine rhythmically about the kind of love that exists only in gramophone records. Whether it was dancing or fighting that was going to the music I did

not know, but whatever it was, the violence was such that I expected the house to tumble about my ears. Human voices began to join in. Human feet pounded up the stairs and along the passages. It was impossible to sleep, for as soon as the noise promised to subside, a new song burst out on the gramophone and the hotel shook more alarmingly than ever, as if under the impact of giants jumping in its vitals. These phenomena ceased before two, but sleep had passed from me, and I was but a wan, insomnious wreck when I went downstairs to breakfast on Sunday morning.

I asked the waitress who were the party who had invaded the hotel so noisily in the small hours. She looked startled, and said that so far as she knew, everyone had been in and the hotel had been locked up early. When I described the phenomena in detail, however, she smiled with an air of relief, and said: "Oh, that was a young gentleman celebrating his twenty-first birthday!" Later in the day I heard that England had been shaken by an earthquake. Friends from various parts of the country boasted of the palpitation of their homes, of vases that danced audibly after midnight, of pencils that rolled off tables. Even as far away as Hull, I read in a newspaper, people had rushed from their houses in alarm. I could find no evidence, however, of anyone's having experienced a shock of anything like the same intensity as that which I myself experienced in the little waterside hotel. I am therefore inclined to wonder whether the seismologists are right in their explanation of Saturday night's earthquake. They attribute it, I gather, to a flaw in the earth's crust somewhere under the North Sea. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the whole thing may have been due to a young gentleman celebrating his twenty-first birthday, the phenomena being most violent at the scene of the celebration and spreading with diminishing effect till they reached the coast and rattled the windows of Hull and Lowestoft?

On discussing the earthquake with other people, I was surprised to find that most of them regarded it as a joke. Some of them were obviously proud to have been contemporaries of the greatest earthquake recorded in English history, but the general attitude was one of amusement. The men of science encouraged this attitude by declaring that earthquakes in England always are and always will be harmless. Thus we were lulled once more into a sense of security in a world in which there is no security, and an earthquake that should have turned us into philosophers has left us exactly as we were. It is regrettable, for it is of the utmost importance that our sense of insecurity should not be allowed to fall permanently asleep. Like ourselves, it should have its sleeping and its waking hours. If we were perpetually conscious of the insecurity of life and happiness we might easily become morbid, and lose our ardour alike in work and in pleasure. If we are never conscious of it, however, we are likely to set a false value on what is really valueless, and to waste our years in the pursuit of things that are not worth pursuing. Hence, it is an excellent medicine for the mind that we should occasionally realise that we are travelling through space on a fragile crust of earth that may one day subside, bringing a sudden end to ourselves, our possessions and our ambitions as our world topples into ruins amid the cracks. Many of the philosophers, at least, have thought so, and have made it their business to remind us that we build up our businesses and pursue our dreams under the shadow of death. We are all condemned to die, it has been said, but under an indefinite reprieve, and we cannot measure the worth of anything in life by a standard which takes no account of this.

On the other hand, it must be admitted, the sense of the insecurity of life affects different men in extraordinarily different fashions. One man comes to the conclusion that it is best in the circumstances to eat, drink and be merry. Another, impressed by the brevity of existence, sees in this a reason against wasting hours so few and so precious. Another is led by the spectacle of an evanescent world to the discovery of a world that will not pass with time, and to live as though even now he were one of its citizens. We saw during the war that the nearness of death, while it might make one man religious, would make his neighbour reckless. Hence, it must be inferred that it requires more than a war or an earthquake or a volcanic eruption to convert human beings in general into philosophers. The men and women who live in the region of a volcano are not conspicuously wiser or more virtuous than those who live in secure and placid villages. The generation that lived in the fear of death during the great plague was less busied about the nature of the good life than the much securer mid-Victorians. This has led some people to believe that human beings are unteachable. And many of us are certainly unteachable by calamity. The truth is, even when our insecurity is staring us in the face, we can temporarily escape and hide ourselves from it in a variety of excitements. And we do.

Whether we enjoy life more as a result of a false belief in our security or as a result of recognising the insecurity of life, is a question not easy to decide. I am myself of the opinion that the happiest man is the man who is conscious of the fleetingness of the world in which he lives and who measures the values of things by the knowledge of his and our mortality. There are men with whom the thought of mortality has been a disease—men who have all but been conscious of the worms consuming their bodies while they were still alive—and these are not to be envied. But with most men the knowledge that they must ultimately die does not weaken the pleasure in being at present alive. To the poet the world appears still more beautiful as he gazes at flowers that are doomed to wither, at Springs that come to too speedy an end. The loveliness of May stirs him the more deeply because he knows that it is fading even as he looks at it. It is not that the thought of universal mortality gives him pleasure, but that he hugs the pleasure all the more closely because he knows it cannot be his for long. Besides, there is probably a deep pleasure to be had merely from facing facts. Men often shrink from truth, but, when they cease to shrink, they find it enjoyable. A man of science, if he could fix the date of the end of the world, would cry "Eureka!" in his joy and would rapturously sit down to write a book about it. Not that he would take a sadistic pleasure in the thought of the extermination of the human race, but the charms of truth would drive every other consideration out of his head. Probably it is for a similar reason that tragedy gives us a far profounder pleasure than comedy. Comedy is just as true to its own side of life as tragedy is to its side of life. But tragedy faces truths that comedy ignores, and depicts a world that knows death—a world that has not merely enjoyed itself but has suffered and wept over its dead for countless generations. Tragedy is an exalted expression of our sense of insecurity. Comedy helps us to forget this. I, myself, usually read comedy and praise tragedy.

I am sure that, if the sense of insecurity enriches literature, it has an equally enriching effect in politics. This was seen during the war, when, alarmed by the sense of insecurity, statesmen performed the impossible. It is a commonplace, and, if statesmen faced the problems of peace with the same determination with which they faced the problems of war, they would find the solutions as miraculously simple. With the return of peace, however, the sense of security returns, and in a secure world men cannot be

persuaded that it is necessary to make the same efforts and the same sacrifices for the common good. What was then national co-operation now becomes Socialism. The individual returns to his money-making on the assumption that he is living in a world in which money-making can be securely pursued for ever. He feels that, with a good bank-balance he is as firmly established as Ben Nevis. When he is told by the pessimists that civilisation is crumbling, he tells himself that at least it will last his time. He believes that earthquakes are dangerous only in countries not his own. So did I till I felt the young gentleman celebrating his twenty-first birthday. At the time I was indignant with the young gentleman, but at least he forced me to realise that I was living in a world that might at any moment tumble in ruins about my careless pillow. Y. Y.

HARD DIVORCES AND SOFT DRINKS

VIEWING the present *débâcle* of law and order in America, the English take pleasure in the thought that they are exempt from a similar catastrophe. This pleasure is not entirely justified—a point which has just been emphasised at the Canterbury Convocation by the Bishops of Salisbury and Chichester. For although there is no likelihood that anything so exaggerated as American lawlessness will take root in this country, a milder form of the same disease has already appeared. There is a close parallel between the American attitude toward the Prohibition law and the English attitude toward the law on divorce. The situation is not so dangerous in England for the obvious reason that, whereas most people at one time or another want a drink, it is not yet true that most people want a divorce. However, it is important to recognise that the insistence on hard divorce in this country has essentially the same results as the insistence on soft drinks in the United States.

There can be no doubt that many influential people in England are willing to circumvent the divorce law as cynically and as light-heartedly as the Americans circumvent their Prohibition law. And it is also true that society sympathises with the lawbreaker in much the same way in both countries. If a man or a woman wishes to be divorced in England for any reason except the partner's adultery, or in any spirit except the most rancorous, it is almost necessary to create false evidence and to engage in illegal collusion. And so many Englishmen—otherwise probably quite law-abiding—are willing to cheat the divorce law, that there are people who make a business of creating bogus evidence for such cases. It is as easy to hire a woman to be surprised in a Brighton bedroom with her hat off, as it is to buy whisky in New York. There are reputable lawyers who have no scruple about going into court with a case of this kind, although they know that the evidence is sham and that perjury is being committed. Englishmen who obtain divorces in this way do not hide the fact from their friends, any more than Americans conceal their dealings with bootleggers. Apparently the only people who have delusions about the situation are the judges in the divorce courts, who must be God's own innocents, to judge by their expressions of surprise and dismay whenever the collusion or the perjury becomes so obvious that it cannot be ignored.

It is useless to speculate on how many Englishmen have this attitude toward divorce, or would be willing to employ these methods; anyone who goes about the world with eyes and ears open must realise that the attitude is widespread to-day, and that it is growing more and more common. And the most important point is that the people who get round the divorce law do not suffer socially. They are not invited to Court; but that is true of many Englishmen. . . . Here, then, we have the two essential elements of the American situation—though, fortunately, on a small scale—important people in the business and professional and social worlds who openly violate a law, committing what is technically a serious crime in so doing, and the appearance of a class of people whose business it is to facilitate such law-evasion. It is clear, then, that the American catastrophe is not simply the result of some peculiar trait in the American character that need not concern other nations. A cynical contempt for law can arise in England also. That being the case, it is important to discover the cause of this contempt, and to deal with it.

The root of the matter is that the laws which have provoked this attitude on the part of otherwise law-abiding people are laws directly affecting the private life of the individual. Such laws are never obeyed by any large and influential minority that regards them as odious. People's loyalty to the democratic principle may induce them to uphold, and to pay public respect to, many laws that they despise—but not if the laws are immediately concerned with what they regard as their private lives. The only way to secure respect for such laws is to make sure that the vast majority of the citizens find them respectable. If a law of this type represents the wishes of only a bare majority, or of a lively and pugnacious minority, then the drift toward American anarchy will commence. It is useless to urge the duty of obedience upon the public. Only a slave will be impressed by such exhortations in a matter that seems to him his own private affair. No people are more law-abiding or more patient than the English, and when they begin to take an American attitude toward a law there is no use blaming the people, it is the law that needs attention. It does not follow that the law is necessarily unwise or unjust; but it is certainly inexpedient for the time being. For example, it is possible that prohibition of alcoholic drink would have social benefits that would far outweigh the inconvenience to the private citizen. In that case, the anti-Prohibitionists are wrong in regarding the law as busy-body legislation. But until a vast majority of the citizens are convinced of the wisdom of Prohibition, the law should not be attempted. Otherwise, the law-evasion of an influential and self-righteous minority will not only bring the particular law into disrespect, but will slowly corrode the authority of law itself.

It is this lesson that England must learn from the horrible example of the United States. The American disaster arose from a premature experiment; the more modest English difficulties are the result of laws that are being maintained after they have lost the respect of an important group in the community. But whatever the cause, the conditions are analogous. And if England follows America's lead, and instead of altering the law so that it may have the support of a vast majority, merely exhorts the dissenters to submit, in the name of the sacredness of law, to what they regard as an unwarrantable interference, the result will be unexpected and unhappy. The just and necessary laws will not be able to cover the unpopular law with their mantle of righteousness; but the cynicism that will be bred by the open evasions of the unpopular law will infect the public attitude toward all authority.

Such a state of affairs, of course, can only arise in connection with laws that are felt, rightly or wrongly, to be an invasion of the citizen's intimate private life. People will submit, for example, to a law regulating the rate of interest chargeable on a second mortgage, even though the law seems to them absurd. But a law that regulates a man's so-called private habits, or his relations with his wife, must be considered with more circumspection and more tact. All this seems self-evident, and has recently been demonstrated at

huge expense by the United States, and yet it does not appear that England is profiting by the lesson. The Bishops in Convocation were alive to the dangers of the situation, and seemed willing to support small concessions to public opinion in the form of a law " which, while extending a little the grounds for which State divorces should be allowed between persons who did not accept Christian standards . . . would put an end to the practice of pretended adultery and perjury which was a blot on our Courts and a blot on society." Small concessions are better than none. How long will Parliament lag behind the Bishops?

HERBERT AGAR.

UNDEVELOPED LAND

WHEN the roar of the City frets me, when I shrink from its blazing lights,
I dream of the cool, green vistas, and the quiet days and the nights
In a tiny corner of England, the haven where I would be;
And I think of the wicked landlords who hold it in trust for me.

It isn't wholly a playground, for much of it's grazed and tilled;
But there's common and woodland and downland where no one's allowed to build
(Save a cottage for local workers), though the landlords could put, God knows,
A fancy figure on ground rents for stockbrokers' bungalows.

There are wastes of gorse and of heather; there are glades where you stroll to-day
Through a dim Arthurian forest (and everywhere rights of way);
There are sites that should be a gold mine to let upon building lease,
All barren and unproductive—excepting of joy and peace.

There's a park which is free to all men; but it's privately owned, which means
That there isn't even a bandstand, or a kiosk, or slot machines;
But only the rolling greensward, and the tall trees and the deer,
And the flowering shrubs reflected in the lazy waters clear.

If ever I snatch a weapon and mount on a barricade,
It won't be for party slogans or a blue or a red cockade,
But to keep one corner of England that's free from the spoiler's hand,
And isn't " fully developed " to pay for the tax on land.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

WAGE REDUCTIONS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondent S. F. Miall says " nor can we defy economic laws." When I read this I thought surely, in paying 5 per cent. interest on the War Loan, we are defying economic laws. " Employer " questions whether " Government stocks, mortgages, etc., should not be, at least in part, deprived of the unlooked-for increment value in the real value of their property." It appears to me that the wage-earners have a right to expect that action will be taken to reduce the interest on War Loan, observing that it was raised on an inflated currency. To-day, if my memory is not at fault, our authorised currency approximates to that in circulation before the war. It would therefore appear equitable for investors in War Loan to forego some of their unearned increment.

Some large firms have written down the value of their shares, and the wage-earners have suffered considerable reductions in wages, because of the fall in the cost-of-living figures issued by the Ministry of Labour.

I should like to see an article in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION dealing with the relation between the rate of interest paid on War Loan as it is affected by the present fixed amount of currency. I have no doubt it would be of great interest to wage-earners when they are next told they must agree to a reduction of wages on account of the heavy taxation.—Yours, etc.,

Plymouth. H.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In reply to criticisms of his article advocating the maintenance of existing money wages, Mr. Cole raises some new but dubious arguments to back his thesis.

He now says that the " vital point " in the problem which his critics have missed is that, until it is settled " where we are to stop " in wage reductions, we ought not to discuss any reductions at all. When prices and profits were rising after the war, many claims for increased wages were made. If those of us who had to deal with these demands had demurred on the grounds that we must first have an assurance as to how far the upward increases were to go, the Trade Unions would have told us, and rightly, not to trifle with them. I submit that Mr. Cole's " vital point " is equally unimpressive.

This does not mean that it is undesirable for us to visualise the dimension of our problem; on the contrary, this is most desirable. Taking *The Economist* indices and Board of Trade retail prices as representing roughly raw materials and manufactures, both as 100 in 1913, we find that in 1927 they had risen to 138 and 164 respectively—a difference of 26 points. For reasons I need not enumerate, in April, 1931, they had fallen to 90 and 147—a difference of 57 points. As normally three-fourths of our exports go to countries dependent on agriculture, is it not obvious that, with this discrepancy in price levels, the great circle of international exchange has broken down? The overseas markets cannot afford our products, and we in return, unable to find buyers, cannot purchase theirs. Is it not equally obvious that the more rapidly we can get the two levels to approximate each other, the sooner trade will assume its normal proportions and prosperity return.

The disparity at present is 31 points more than in 1927. Let us hope we may look to natural and automatic reactions eliminating half these points through the prices of raw materials rising. We may also look presumably to some help from the other direction of manufactured prices being reduced by technological progress. To secure the rest of the adjustment needed for a return to a disparity not greater than that of 1927, money wage reductions may be necessary. Is it not unwise to refuse to consider them if, by so doing, they bring back the international trade and comparative prosperity of four years ago?

It would trespass too much on your space to deal adequately with all the doubtful points Mr. Cole raises, but may I mention the following?

He is firmly convinced that prices have nothing to do with export sales and that this demand is inelastic. A few pages from his letter is the advertisement of a well-known food manufacturing firm, giving remarkable illustrations of how demand has been stimulated by lower prices. Mr. Cole has given us no ground for thinking that the elasticity of demand shown in this advertisement is unique, or for agreeing with his view that the export demand is inelastic.

Mr. Cole is still stressing the idea that wage reductions will cause retaliation in the countries with which we compete. Australia has made and is still making drastic money wage reductions; they are generally regarded as sane moves, and no one has suggested that they will cause retaliation in Canada.

Two indirect grounds are mentioned to justify Trade Union resistance to wage reduction; that it will intensify action in artificially controlling prices, and that it will cause the unexpected gain of the rentier to be dealt with. The first is, I believe, far too dependent on the views of the rest of the world to be in the slightest influenced by Trade Union policy in this country. Provided that the second is only opposition conditional on action being taken to deal with the rentier, and not opposition in all circumstances, it is a view to be supported. I should like to think that the former was true, but must confess I have grave doubts.

Mr. Cole maintains that dock labour is " unsheltered." All

I can reply is that such is not the generally accepted view. A "sheltered" industry is one which, for geographical reasons or those of time, is exempt from the competition of an alternative supply from abroad. Dock labour cannot be imported from abroad to compete with the native supply into this country, though it may be into others; without a Channel tunnel international trade has no alternative, except the Zeebrugge ferry, to using the docks. The exorbitant handling charges of our ports compared with those of the Continent are a notorious handicap which neither our exports nor imports can escape, and a readjustment of the labour regulations more than the rate of wage of this "sheltered" industry would be an important item in our efforts towards a lower price level.

In conclusion, may I repeat that, like Mr. Cole, I wish to press for international stabilisation and possibly raising of prices, but I cannot believe that by itself such action will get us out of our difficulties? Simultaneously, we must look to money wages and everything else conforming to a lower price level. We did it in 1921 and 1922; other countries are doing it to-day, and even Australia has realised its inevitability. The sooner all sections of the community in this country view the position dispassionately, the better.—Yours, etc.,

EMPLOYER.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondents, S. F. Miall and "Employer," both invoke economic laws against G. D. H. Cole's contentions in "Why We Should Not Reduce Wages." They are, in my opinion, right in their pure economics. Wages must be reduced; entrepreneurs will obtain a greater margin of profit; employment and production will then increase. But how will this process affect the working class? Is the demand for labour so elastic that a 10 per cent. cut in wages will increase employment by 10 per cent.? Unless it is, the "slight loss of purchasing power resulting from reduction of wages of those employed" will not be "offset by the largely increased purchasing power of the fresh men brought into industry." Taking into account the loss of the "dole" it is probable that the real purchasing power of the wage-earners will fall. It is certain that their relative share in the social product will fall. The pure economics of capitalism lead them to the conclusion that the reduction of wages to a "normal" level will cause the total national income to increase while the wage-earners' share in it will diminish (relative share, certainly; absolute share, probably). Does this involve the paradox that the wage-earners' inability to buy back their product will create a crisis and fresh unemployment? Certainly not, provided the increased production consists of the right commodities. Part of the increased output will take the form of more luxury consumption by non-wage-earners (especially of personal services); the rest will take the form of export of capital, which we will be able to bring up to the pre-war level.

According to this analysis, the real cause of our chronic economic *malaise* since 1921 is a level of wages too high to afford the entrepreneur an adequate incentive. The working class has been getting more than it pleases the owners of the means whereby it works to give it. Until it abates the price of its labour, the owners will carry on a stay-in strike, by reducing production and hence employment. The only terms on which the whole of our national resources and labour-power may be fully used is that the owners shall get a larger share of the product, both absolute and relative than they do at present.

If these conclusions are correct, the most important problem before the economists of the Labour Party is to devise means by which full employment and full utilisation of natural resources (and hence a maximum of production) may be reconciled with the workers' claim for a larger share in the wealth that they help to create.—Yours, etc.,

31 Cromer Terrace, Leeds. H. D. DICKINSON.

FREE SPEECH IN CHILDHOOD

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Two letters concerning Beacon Hill School in your issue of June 6th call for a few words of reply.

First, as regards Mr. Schofield's, the limitations of freedom which exist at Beacon Hill School are such as we have found necessary in the interests of health. We see to it that the children are clean twice a day, and that they get a sufficient length of time in bed. Neither of these things would happen if the children were left completely free, but neither entails any curtailment of free speech, and we find both easy to carry out without resort to punishment. During the first term of the school there was a certain difficulty in establishing the routine; but once established, it continues through the force of habit and example.

As regards the letter of Mr. W. E. Williams, I should like to say that I have been surprised myself at the success of co-operative poetry. Some of the poems are individual, some are produced by two or three together, some by as many as four or five. The children all know each other so well that a kind of instinctive co-operation among them has become possible, such as I have seen described in anthropological accounts of the Melanesians and such people.

Take the case of the poem, "In the Graveyard," which was printed in your issue of May 30th. Having just seen a graveyard, the five concerned spontaneously decided they would like to write a poem on the subject. One of them contributed the idea of an old crone; another the idea of the love-bird. Even the tone of the poem is, I think, generally co-operative; certainly the detail was so. For the end of the third verse, for example, one child suggested: "One was her love-bird wild"; a second said, "That is too short"; a third said, "Yes, we must have another word with a 'w,'"; and the fourth suggested, "One was her love-bird weird and wild," which was adopted. I do not think this suggests the existence of a poetic Mussolini in the group.

May I suggest that Homer and the Authorised Version were not products of individual genius, and that the individualism of the artist is perhaps over-emphasised in modern times?—Yours, etc.,

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

Harting, Petersfield.
June 8th, 1931.

THE NEW PARTY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—My friends have been expostulating with me for joining the New Party. Their prognostications are very gloomy, and so, if I may say so, are yours. Can any good come out of a group of disgruntled Left and Right wingers, without a policy, without a rank and file, and with only somebody's ill-gotten wealth to lean back on and a misconceived Fascism to look up to?

My answer is emphatically—yes. I have little expectation that the movement will succeed, the odds against it are too heavy; but there are two ways at least in which it must inevitably do good.

The first is educative. The New Party is genuinely new, in that it is the first party which has adopted a human, that is to say, a consciously creative attitude towards political problems. That is why people say it has no policy. The most that the Labour Party has ever achieved has been a semi-conscious, piously optimistic, amœbic evolutionism.

The second is that it gives self-respecting men and women an opportunity of rebelling against the timid, bewildered, pig-headed beggars on horseback, who, after boasting what they would do if we gave them horses, plaintively occupy themselves with unedifying imitations of their betters—by kind permission of their betters—and that at a time when courage, vision and initiative are desperately needed.

If our days are numbered, it is better to die consciously fighting, than semi-consciously vomiting up a surfeit of respectability.—Yours, etc.,

12 Primrose Hill Road, N.W. 3. RICHARD HOPE.

FOOTWEAR

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The article on this subject in your current issue seems to be an interesting mixture of fact and fiction, particularly so far as it concerns the relative merits, as regards feet, of the women of different countries. The writer appears to favour the wearing of American and French shoes. Apparently the heel that "slopes steeply down" is better than the heel which is in any way square.

The moral of the article appears to me to be that women should imitate men when they wish to be comfortable, though the writer's own experience is that the male foot, at any rate in youth, is also frequently deformed. Does Dr. Bonnard really believe in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, as she talks

of a "congenital aspect"? If so, she must expect babies to be born with bunions, which according to the views of most of us are due to the wearing of too short a shoe when the foot is rapidly growing. The orthopædic aspects of heels, versus none, are too complicated for discussion in a lay journal, and the question of function must not be forgotten; for example, waiters, in spite of their flat shoes, have equally flat feet, whilst hospital nurses, with heels of every grade, suffer from a similar defect.—Yours, etc.,

STELLA CHURCHILL.

Strand-on-the-Green House, Chiswick, W. 4.
June 5th, 1931.

[Dr. Bonnard writes: I presume that most of the fiction in my article is to be found in the allegations against Englishwomen's feet. It is true that impressions have been relied on rather than anthropometric measurement. Nevertheless, I have had opportunities of studying shod and bare feet in many countries in Europe, and still uphold my original thesis that quite apart from the racial variations in foot forms, actual deformities are commoner in Great Britain than in the rest of Europe. The fact that American shoe manufacturers succeed in fitting comfortably all the various European foot shapes found in their own mixed population shows that the problem is a relatively simple anatomical one, and could be solved equally well by British manufacturers. Dr. Churchill misunderstood my use of the phrase "congenital aspect." It was intended to show that bunions are so common that they are almost regarded as a natural possession. The reverse is, of course, true. I agree that the questions of function and special occupational strains are too complicated and lengthy for discussion here.]

NATURE'S PRUNING HOOK

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Surely all well-wishers for the world must have read with something akin to dismay the latest deliverance of Sir Arthur Keith in his Rectorial Address at Aberdeen: "Nature keeps her human orchard healthy by pruning: war is her pruning-hook. We cannot dispense with her services." This after all our recent aspirations—our resolutions and renunciations of war! Only the other day Mr. MacDonald was picturing the time "when the nations will be able to meet not even thinking of how to prevent war, but taking it for granted that war is quite out of date." And Mr. Henderson, time and again, and in trenchant phrase, has been insisting on the necessity not only for the avoidance but for the obsolescence of war. And now we are told to regard it as a minister of health with which we cannot dispense!

And is not Sir Arthur's argument as bad in logic as it is deplorable in tone? The analogy of the individual for whom law has already replaced war—the appeal to courts for the appeal to personal combat—surely furnishes a just inference that nations may learn (as indeed they *are* slowly learning) to do the same. And as for "health" and "the pruning-hook," is not this a solecism at the present day, when all who have weighed the matter, and who know, tell us that war on the scale, and with the weapons and the cost, with which it would in future be waged would probably mean the destruction and ruin of civilisation?

This "Nature," this "she," that Sir Arthur endows with such over-riding purpose and power, we all know is a mere figment of the imagination. "There's no sich a person." Let us have done with this objectionable Mrs. Harris and get on with our own improvement.—Yours, etc.,

W. S. GODFREY.

Chevington Grove, Bury St. Edmund's, Suffolk.
June 7th, 1931.

THE POSITION IN EGYPT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As one who has been in close touch with Egypt and Egyptians for the past twelve years, I ask permission to comment on the editorial note in your issue of to-day's date. In it you refer to the "popular parties" in Egypt. There has never in recent times been more than one "popular" party in Egypt, and that is the Wafd, though it is, I think, true to say that it owed its power to some extent to methods of intimidation. The handful of highly educated Egyptians who compose the Constitutional Liberal Party have never had any important following in the country and the party survives to-day only by clinging to the coat-tails of the Wafd. It has been aptly said that the Wafd was an army without officers and the Liberal Constitutionals a group of officers without troops. The alliance between these two parties seems somewhat artificial, but if it were consolidated one might hope for considerable improvement in the directive ability of the Wafd.

Sidky Pasha's Government is certainly not popular, and though Wafdist stories of abuses in the recent general elections are exaggerated, there is doubtless some truth in them. But the outstanding fact of the situation seems to me to be that there is no general, spontaneous feeling in the country against the present regime or in favour of the Wafd. It is evident that the Wafd, when deciding to boycott the elections, much overestimated the present strength of their following in the provinces. Demonstrations in the cities in Egypt can always be easily arranged and are almost meaningless as indications of popular opinion; yet such demonstrations as occurred, even in Cairo, were extraordinarily limited in their scope and lacked any air of spontaneity. The feeling throughout the country as a whole seems rather to have been one of apathy, and it looks as though the Egyptian people are for the moment satiated with politicians and political unrest and merely want—as a much greater authority (Sir Rennell Rodd) than myself has suggested—to be left in peace to get on with their work.

The position as regards negotiations for an Anglo-Egyptian treaty is, as you say, "extremely awkward." Sidky Pasha, possibly, will be clever enough to avoid raising this question just yet. In any case, it seems to me useless ever again to waste time negotiating with the representatives of any one Egyptian party. Sidky is, in my opinion, probably the only prominent Egyptian statesman who would have the courage not only to accept and sign a treaty that satisfied him, but also to carry it through in despite of all criticism; but Sidky, evidently, is not under present conditions eligible for the task. It remains, therefore, to wait in the hope that tempers in Egypt will simmer down sufficiently to permit the formation of a body representing all Egyptian parties, under a neutral chairman, to try to find a solution for outstanding differences between England and Egypt. It is further to be desired that their negotiations with the British spokesmen should be conducted in Cairo. The voyage from England to Egypt, though it now takes so short a time, has more than once proved to have a really almost unaccountable effect in changing the views of Egyptian politicians.—Yours, etc.,

MITFARRIG.

London, W.1.
June 6th.

[We know all about the Egyptian Liberal Party. We referred to it as a "popular" party, because in the present crisis it is allied with the Wafd in the defence of constitutionalism and popular rights. It may be true, as our correspondent suggests, that the mass of Egyptians are at the moment apathetic. But there is obviously an active minority which will not be put down, and will presently stir the country again.—ED. *N.S. and N.*]

INSURANCE SUPPLEMENT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—We have just discovered that in supplying Mr. Egginton Paull with figures for the Table published in your Insurance Supplement of May 23rd, we made what is to us a serious error. In column 6 (Whole Life Assurance, Non-profit) instead of £405, the figure should have been £636 for this Company.—Yours, etc.,

H. O. LEACH,
General Manager, Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada.

2, 3 and 4 Cockspur Street, S.W. 1.

"ADVICE TO MOTORISTS"

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Jack Barclay, has called attention to an interesting motoring point. How many motorists, when they buy a new cover, buy a new tube as well? Surely a very small proportion. Most of them will cheerfully fit a new cover with a tube that has had 15,000, perhaps 20,000 miles of use. For although the tube is protected from the road, it is subject to changes and to a certain amount of stretching in an old cover. The fitting of patches, affecting the amount of stretch in different parts of the tube, may also have a weakening effect.

Personally, I always examine the inner tube very closely when buying a new cover and I do not hesitate to discard it if it shows the slightest sign of weakness. It is a policy which I find pays.—Yours, etc.,

B. PLEASS, Hon. Secretary.

57 Devonshire Street, Gt. Portland Street, W. 1.

Miscellany

GLINKA AND VERDI

MUSIC lovers are in an embarrassing situation at the present moment because there is so much that is new and interesting for them to hear with the Italian opera season at Covent Garden and the Russian opera season at the Lyceum. To those capable of real perception and enthusiasm I will suggest that there are some productions at the present moment which they should spare no effort to see. In the first place I would put *Falstaff*.

Falstaff is an opera for composers. Perhaps only musicians should be admitted to a performance of this masterpiece of grace, wit, delicacy and refinement. If one were Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and had to entertain the most eminent musicians from all parts of the world at an international congress, one could not do better than give them a first-rate performance of *Falstaff*. Other operatic masterpieces have qualities which may awaken a frenzied partisanship, but the sheer craftsmanship of *Falstaff* is an inexhaustible banquet to offer to a composer of any school or period. The present production is perhaps the best we have ever had at Covent Garden. Tullio Serafin is an excellent conductor, and the score lost none of its delicacy, lightness and speed at his hands. Mariano Stabile is the finest Falstaff of the day. One must remember that this is not quite the Falstaff of Shakespeare; it is the Falstaff of Boito and Verdi, an Italian Falstaff. Once that is acknowledged we can see clearly that Stabile's performance is practically faultless. But to describe it thus is inadequate, since faultlessness suggests a negative rather than a positive virtue. It is because Stabile sings and acts with a verve that almost leaves one breathless, and a poise that makes all difficulties the merest trifles, together with a variety and a subtlety of tonal and facial expression that match the flickering flexibility of Verdi's score, that one describes his performance as faultless. He is supported by a good cast of whom Badini (Ford), Nessi (Bardolfo), Autori (Pistol), and Borgioli (Fenton) are all admirable in every respect. Among the women Elvira Casazza's Quickly is perhaps on the highest level, but Stani Zawaska gave an unusually gay and attractive performance as Alice Ford. The stage setting is good, and it is characteristic of Verdi's last work that the deepest impression is made by the ensembles—for example, the wonderful conclusion to the first scene of the third act in preparation for the midnight meeting in Windsor Park and those of the final scene. Here we get the quintessence of music, purged of all dross with that purity which the imagination achieves when it has become pure form.

It is no use expecting to appreciate *Falstaff* properly at a first hearing, or at every stage in one's musical development. The day and the hour must be awaited, and it would be quite fitting for a music lover to say after hearing *Falstaff:* "Well, since this is acknowledged to be one of the great things in music and it leaves me lukewarm, my day for it has not yet come." One should never pretend to enjoy what one does not enjoy, and it is surely the most intolerable humbug to believe that everybody at every moment is ripe and capable of understanding and enjoying the greatest works of art. At the present moment there happen to be three operas by Verdi being performed at Covent Garden which differ greatly in character. Each makes a different appeal. Two of them, *La Traviata* and *Falstaff* are masterpieces because each has a completeness and a unity of style which *La Forza del Destino* lacks. *La Traviata* is the finest and most exquisite expression of sentiment in music, and in Rosa Ponselle we have a singer who can do justice to the role. But *La Forza del Destino* has a tragic sinister quality that is all its own, and I am not sure that by judicious selection and arrangement of Verdi's earlier and later versions a producer of imaginative insight could not make it completely satisfying. It contains much wonderful music, and it may reveal to some the genius of Verdi more than *Traviata* and *Falstaff* do.

What a pity it is that Glinka did not live longer! The first act of *Russlan and Ludmilla* now being performed at the Lyceum is so good that it makes its failure to live up to that beginning most disappointing. The natural musical genius of Glinka is unmistakable here. The music is spontaneous, vivid, and has all the characteristics of a great talent. There is no fumbling and no lack of constructive power. The canon sung by the principals, after the sudden magical disappearances from the midst of the court of the Princess Ludmilla, is an example of real imaginative musical creation which would lead one to think that in the later scenes with the wizard Finn and the sorceress Naina Glinka would have all sorts of surprises for us. But nothing of the sort happened. A beautiful aria (founded, I believe, on a Finnish folk-song) is given to Finn and was finely sung by G. Pozemkovsky, but the scenes with Naina were nothing more than conventional ballet music, and these ballets were executed with no more than a mediocre efficiency, and were certainly not visualised and invented with any rare degree of talent. The setting of the opera by Bilinsky was in the first scene excellent, but in the scenes of Naina's Palace and the Magic Garden of Tchernomov less successful. The cast was good: Madame Lissitchkina proving herself a coloratura soprano of considerable ability, and the Ratmir of A. Rebane being a particularly well conceived performance, but the disappointment was chiefly due to Glinka's failure to keep pace with his conceptions. For one cannot doubt that in this his second opera he chose a fantastic subject because it appealed to him. When one considers the date of the opera, 1842, one realises how greatly gifted Glinka was. If he had had better health, if he had lived longer, he might have done many fine things. In the meantime, there is much that we can admire and enjoy in *Russlan and Ludmilla*. It is musically enormously superior to most of the operas of Rimsky-Korsakoff, and with a more artistic handling of the ballet scenes the present production would make it one of the most interesting and effective operas of the Russian repertory.

W. J. TURNER.

REFLECTIONS IN A MIRROR

ONCE in a Cambodian palace, and once again (I think) at Wembley, I met an infinite number of myselves in a room panelled with mirrors. Myselves were massed in dwindling perspectives—some turning a conscious cold shoulder one to another, like fellow-guests who have not been introduced—some wholeheartedly unaware of one another's presence, some anxiously watching me as if they expected me to utter an epoch-making remark, some sturdily standing with their backs to me in order to return the wistful stare of some outlying member of the horde. This army of myselves seemed to me at first a challenge, and then an attack—almost a lynching.

Imitations, as I had known, stand always ready to lynch the original; substitutes seek realities in order to murder them; words assemble like vultures to devour thought; formulæ suck the blood from the living phrase and leave it a husk, as the young of scorpions drain and desert the body of their mother. But in myself I thought I contained

the only indisputable reality; until I faced this rabble of myselves, I had not realised how much at the mercy of imitation was even this me—this lonely and genuine flesh that clung about my bones. Here were exact copies of this self-contained flesh of mine—seen flesh that was no flesh—a cheap imitation of me, an infringement of my patent, and apparently just as good as the original. What was myself, then, if a hundred other perfect myselves could be so lightly printed on a hundred facets of an enclosure? At once the menace of substitutes became real to me—the lynching of myself by myselves was begun, and in a moment I was clinging for dear life to my bones, the only part of me which—it seemed to me—was above competition with this dangerous, pretentious crowd; the only part that, claiming nothing, could not be denounced as impostor. I pinched my elbow; *there* undoubtedly was the bone; it confessed itself robustly to my fingers—a splendid secret, like the lantern at the belt of the boy Stevenson. All the women in all the mirrors pinched their elbows too, but pinched them in vain, I thought triumphantly; they could never prove the receipt of a message from the bone, mere jellies-for-the-eye that they were. Yet could I prove it? To whom could I prove it? How faultlessly did the scores of substitutes imitate my look of triumph over a thing proven; they knew, evidently, all my tricks of expression—better than I did myself. I had never seen before that rugged pucker at the corner of my left eye that half the profile myselves so impudently parodied. Were they—even boneless as they were—perhaps more me than I was? I looked at that half of the multitude that turned its back upon me, and was disquietingly introduced to the me that walked the earth *when I was not looking*. I saw the humble, unforeseen line of my back—the ignoble aspect of my hat—which had a side as secret as the moon's other side; the sight of my stranger heels ready to walk away from me reminded me that behinds—like hats—are among dignity's most vulnerable points, always the first salients to fall before the onslaught of buffoon circumstances. So this unauthorised poor dummy of a thing walked about representing me in other people's sight. Even the frontal aspect—the authorised version of myself—the facet on which what attention I could spare to my appearance was lavished, seen parodied by all these substitutes, winking and blinking with such idiot unanimity—made me ashamed to have faced eyes all my life. Here, therefore, was a menacing majority of false myselves; here was a silent outshouting by the imitation of what I had hoped was the reality. I lifted my right hand and, like an obsequious orchestra hanging on the conductor's baton, the massed ranks raised a hundred right hands, tense in a grip of invisible bows over invisible instruments—the recoil, it seemed to me, before an impulse of thunderous false music. There were too many performers; I was outnumbered. Yet, I thought, as we all lowered our arms again and desperately pinched our elbows until they (or, as I hoped, mine only) tingled, with *me* was the leadership, with *me* was the bone. Certainly these glassy thin women lied if they claimed the bone; certainly when I am dead my bones will lie immortal in the earth, whereas of these nothing will be found—nothing—not even a scratch on the glass behind which they now grimace. Show their teeth as they may, they lie in their teeth; their teeth—claiming to be bone—lie. Teeth, I sometimes think, are like those small trivial atolls of islands that show above the surface of oceans—islands that, we are told, are but the topmost crags of immense submarine mountain ranges, whispered clues to the secret substance of the world; all that the simple sun can understand of the dark, fearful solidity of earth. And so, I think, teeth prick prettily through the flesh as mere hints of the submerged, barbarous bones of man. Only when the world is dead and the veins and arteries of the world's waters dry away, will the drowned mountains confess themselves to the stars; only when death calls the bluff of the skin and flesh and soul and blood and brain, when the dry skeleton snarls between naked teeth, will man's single truth be finally declared.

And so, they lied in their teeth—these false myselves; I gnashed my teeth at them; the champing click was my triumph over their soundless mouthings. I smiled at them—they smiled at me—but their smiles proved no real appreciation of the joke. I felt my own smile with my fingers—and lost it at once. No matter; it was certainly I who had inspired this concerted impulse of the fingers; something more than the bone was demonstrably mine, then—something called *inspiration*. Their impulse had depended on my inspiration, expressed by my bones, plus a reflecting machine called a mirror. I was, therefore, free among all these prisoners; I could disentangle myself from this snare of mirrors—they, never. I was the original, they the substitutes; I was the music, they the gramophone records. . . . . And then, thinking complacently of reality and its substitutes, I remembered music drowning in its advancing flood of substitutes. I suddenly found, to my horror, that music had no right to complain—music was itself a substitute. Music, in calling itself an expression, admits itself a substitute—the way, but not the life. Bone was no assurance, inspiration no safeguard; pinch as you may the authentic bone of creation under the skin of music, you prove nothing. The difference between music in itself and music's lamentable mechanical voice is a difference of degree only; a gramophone has as good a right to play as Kreisler has; the gramophone must be honoured as a substitute for a substitute. Music is a substitute for thought, thought for understanding, understanding for peace; crossword puzzles are substitutes for books, books for knowledge, knowledge for divinity; husbands and wives are substitutes for lovers, lovers for unicorns and dreams; chairs are substitutes for thrones and thrones for godship; feet, bony feet, are substitutes for wheels, and wheels for wings and wings for omnipresence; dolls are substitutes for live pets, pets for babies, babies for immortality; servants are substitutes for slaves and slaves for the power that a thousand hands (like Kwan-yin's) would give us; Bibles are substitutes for consolation, consolation for safety, safety for joy. . . . Where were my bones now? I thought, for in each of these series of substitutes that streamed into my mind, it was the *copy* that contained the crude bone—the thing copied was the unproven thing, the intangible illusion—peace, divinity, eternity—these bodiless originals are the realities which our poor, creaking, bony substitutes labour in vain to embody. Bones, then, are substitutes for souls . . . . the willing flesh apes the weak spirit. My scaffolding of bones crumbled within me; what proof had I now of my own lonely solidity in a world of mirrored myselves? There was nothing for it but to gather my refuted substitute claim of bones together and flee from the place.

And though with my brain I know that I left no shadow behind in that shadowy room, yet, when I remember that crowd of myselves, a silly fear persuades me that they are still there—triumphing, rank on rank, in possession of the field I so weakly disputed—still there, holding their soundless bivouack—a hundred shadows, a thousand shadows, lacking only one—this shadow-me, who am afraid to return.

For, even as I write this, I can hear the gramophone next door gargling a thin tenor sound, a substitute for the voice that used to come from the throat of Caruso, whose reality "is dust."

STELLA BENSON.

MOCHIZUKI : MOONLIGHT

By Hiroshige.

THE sun set hours ago, the night is deep,
This is the time for men to be asleep,
And we are weary—worse—we are afraid.
There is no sound; black-silent stand the pines,
Upon the sea far off the full moon shines
Out of the empty sky, her light is cold;
If every man were dead, she would not mind;
The dark is huge, and hollow, and unkind;
The moon is very old.

H. F. M. Prescott.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Marry and Hate

MARRY at Leisure, Mr. Vosper's play at the Haymarket, depends on the idea that, if people would only refrain from legal matrimony, they would all live happily ever after. Alan and Helen Forbes had lived in sin together for twenty years and were still as devoted as the day they began; then they married, with disastrous results. Alan took to golf, Helen to nagging; the chintzes in the drawing-room changed to a sombre brown (a very odd consequence of matrimony, this) and the old retainer—hitherto called Nanny—became Norton, and thereupon gave notice. What marriage could survive such a hail of blows? Within six months Alan and Helen were divorced; but as this is a comedy and not a tragedy, the decree nisi not merely ended but also obliterated the six horrid months of married life, and so on the day that it was made absolute Alan and Helen began a new and happy life of sin together—with Nanny and the old chintzes, of course.

The play has little point except that it gives Miss Marie Tempest chances to laugh and cry and tap her foot—all of which she does as excellently as ever—and Mr. Graham Browne opportunity to play the part he always plays so charmingly—that of Miss Tempest's faithful adorer. Sentimental theatre fans will surely be enchanted to see such years of devotion in one play or another at last requited.

As for the rest of the cast, there are some of the usual shrill, frank, sentimental and generally odious young people without whom no modern comedy appears to be complete; two exaggerated but funny Bohemian friends of the Forbes's lawless days; Lord and Lady Challow, of the blue-blooded County (who should have been frigid, but were most pathetically conciliatory); a very efficient Nanny (Miss Clare Greet); and a really charming vicar's wife (Miss Lola Duncan)—who heard every piece of gossip for miles around through the agency of "little birds." The rather commonplace dialogue does not carry off the manifest absurdities of the plot. There is a glorious nightmare dinner party, however, at which the County and Bohemia meet and scrap. On the whole, the play is vulgar without being boring, unless, of course, vulgarity bores. Those who think beds funny will find them both amusingly and extensively dealt with, while for those who do not the delightful acting of Miss Tempest and Mr. Graham Browne alone will provide a good, though thin, evening's entertainment.

"A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur"

Is the humour of this particular story rather worn out, or is it merely that *When Knights Were Bold* was so much more brilliant, at any rate with Jimmy Welch, than the original? The fun of *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* (Regal) hardly seemed worth the candle. You saw so exactly what was going to happen before it actually did. When a knight in full Agincourt armour put his hand up to the telephone and says Camelot IIII., you felt too long had been taken over the joke for it to be quite worth while. The storm of the Norman castle by a fleet of Baby Austins was amusingly produced, and there was a good moment when Will Rogers, armed with his lasso, dismounted a Renaissance knight. But, for me, the mere capacities of the film to bring out the possibilities of the story made the story heavy. I could have laughed more had more been left to the imagination. Will Rogers got the most that could be got out of his part; and the whole company acted in a high-spirited charade spirit which suited the simple humour of the theme. But is it not the essence of charades that the actors should not have too many props?

"Rango"

Rango (at the Plaza) is an extremely good and original film. It is remarkable in the fact that it observes unity of place. The scene is laid in the corner of the jungle in and around the hut of a Sumatran hunter and his son. The main characters are an old male ourang, the ourang's child, a large colony of monkeys, a lemur, a tiger, and a horned buffalo. The tiger kills the small ourang, is worried by a gun shot from the Sumatran, eats some fowls, and is finally killed by the horned buffalo. The searchlight is turned on to a small corner of the jungle during a short space of time. This film, more than almost any other, avoids seeing wild animals in terms of pets. Indeed, the terror spread by the tiger, the savagery of the tiger and the brutal but necessary traps laid to catch him present a society almost more disagreeable than our own. The final fight between the buffalo and the tiger is as horrible as it is moving. If the film is slightly anthropomorphic, we must reflect that this is probably inevitable in any animal film in which human beings, however discreetly, figure. Only right at the end, when the ourang becomes for a moment the elderly heroine of a Hollywood picture, waiting vainly for a son's return, is there a deliberately false appeal to the emotions, an attempt to make us say, "How like us." *Rango* is an admirable and moving film, almost devoid of comic relief. The director is also to be complimented on the dignity of the spoken accompaniment.

* * *

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Saturday, June 13th—
Myra Hess and Jelly D'Aranyi, Beethoven Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.
Military Searchlight Tattoo, Aldershot.

Sunday, June 14th—
C. Delisle Burns on "The Standard of Living," Conway Hall, 11.

Monday, June 15th—
"The Age of Youth," by H. F. Maltby and Fred I. Wynne, Kingsway Theatre.

Tuesday, June 16th—
"Lovers' Meeting," Prince of Wales Theatre.
"A Delicate Situation," by Curt Golz, Embassy Theatre.
Debate on "Perversely Preferring the Past to the Present," between G. K. Chesterton and Miss Winifred Holtby, London School of Economics, 5.30.

Wednesday, June 17th—
"Le Viol de Lucrèce," Arts Theatre.
Daisy Kennedy and Miklos Schwalb, Beethoven Recital, Grotrian Hall, 8.30.

Thursday, June 18th—
"Death Takes a Holiday," Savoy Theatre.
International Horse Show, Olympia.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IN a remote cottage in the Cotswolds—there are still some remote hamlets in that rather over-desired countryside—can be seen, if you are lucky enough to be a friend of the artist, some of the best acting in the world. It is acting which is interpretation rather than imitation, hieratic rather than emotional, imaginative rather than fanciful. The actors are capable of tragedy, of pastoral, of rustic comedy, of the comedy of manners, of farce, and of something beautifully strange which mingles the fascination of ballet with the austerer appeal of religious drama. The actors are marionettes: and no one who has seen Mr. William Simmonds manipulating them, either in his own house, or on one of his rare visits to London, will wish to dispute what Mrs. Haiman Joseph says in her *A Book of Marionettes* (Allen and Unwin, revised edition, 16s.). Mrs. Joseph, who has seen marionettes of all nations, who is herself in America a distinguished maker of puppets, and whose book is the only guide in English to the revival of this lovely art, declares that Mr. Simmonds' marionettes are the most exquisite she has ever seen. No one who is interested in dramatic illusion should miss a chance of seeing them; for here, by a magic that is the artist's secret, are little wooden images, about a foot and a quarter high, who can give one a sense of intense reality which only the very greatest actors in flesh and blood can convey. As one looks at these enchanting and enchanted dolls, the grosser figures of one's self and one's friends become only clumsy imitations of the perfect puppets, unwieldy, oversize efforts at marionettes which the maker has cut loose from the privilege of his studio, and left to wander, with dangling strings, in a world where nothing is safe except for the artist. As one watches the antic gestures of "real people," after one has been looking at the puppets, one realises, with a catch in the breath, that those loose strings can get into the hands of some very odd and dangerous manipulators.

* * *

While this achieving of a perfect illusion, an illusion greater than actual life's, is true only of the master puppet-makers, it is odd how an eye imaginatively and artistically pure can still find in the crudest of wooden dolls an illusion greater than that afforded by more imitative arts. Mr. Gordon Craig, who has made and played with puppets himself, cannot believe that the slick verisimilitude of the screen will finally defeat the greater truthfulness of the puppets. He has written: "Burattini are magical, whereas cinema is only mechanical. When a framework of a film-machine is one day found by curiosity-hunters in the ruins of a cellar and marvelled over, the Burattini will still be alive and kicking." I fully agree with him; but what I want to know is whether people will wish to watch the puppets kicking? The other day, to my intense joy, I found a Punch and Judy show in Central London. The puppets were not very good. The voice of Punch had neither the note of shrill triumph, nor of gruff anger that should be his. Toby was languid—but then it was still earthquake weather, and Toby, I fancy, was always liable to be bored. Anyway, it was a Punch and Judy show—and there were present so poor a little audience, and it apparently ashamed with more than the old conventional shame that always overtakes an audience at the moment of the circulation of the bag. These rude dolls have a vigour, a liveliness that one hardly ever sees on the screen. Is it not the secret of Mr. Chaplin's greatness that he has turned himself into a marionette, and so become a vehicle for universal life, instead of a mere exploiter of his own individuality? Yet as I looked at the handful of people gazing at the old drama, I felt that they were unworthy. They were spoiled by the screen. They wanted something for nothing, a performance that need not prevent slumber, and could not provoke to thought.

* * *

Yet Mrs. Joseph is not without hope about the future of puppets in her country. She takes what is, I suppose, the wise line, that puppet-shows and the cinematograph need not be enemies; certainly in Paris, where children are so erroneously supposed to be more sophisticated, the Petit Guignol does not lose its popularity any more than the circus. Yet even in France the puppets have to fight for their living.

> In Lyons I saw the dismal, half-filled little theatre of the original Guignol, down near the wharf. Alas! the admissions of the scanty audience had not sufficed for many years to pay the puppeteers: the city itself has subsidised the little puppet show in order that the local institution may not altogether perish. But there is no real reason that the motion picture need supplant the marionette: in Czechoslovakia, in Germany, in Italy, in America, the puppets flourish side by side with the cinema. In fact, not once, but often an enthusiastic urchin has come up to me after my puppet shows with the words of superlative praise: "Gee, lady, them puppets was a good movie!"

That seems to me sinister praise, even from a small boy. There is no chance of a real revival in truthful puppetry if we allow people to think the art is comparable with the devices of the movie. The whole object of the average movie-show is to make you *believe* you are seeing what is represented on the screen; it is an appeal to your credulity. You are asked to waive your critical sense. The whole object of the marionette theatre—and the same is true of great acting by living actors—is to *make* you see what is represented; it is an appeal to your imagination, and your critical faculty should be wide awake. The difference between puppets and screen is the whole difference between imitation and interpretation, between materialism and idealism, between prose and poetry.

* * *

There can be no doubt that the decline of puppetry which was fairly general in the nineteenth century was mainly due to the growth of naturalism. Even the puppet makers followed the fashion, and abandoned imaginative truth for factual verisimilitude. Goncourt wrote of Holden's puppets: "He made perfect imitations of living people, but he lacked imagination. Holden's puppets were undoubtedly marvels of precision, but their appeal is to the eye, not to the spirit." There will be no great revival in the true art of the marionette until we have succeeded in making the spiritual in the theatre more important than the visual. Only so indeed can what is seen and heard attain once more their highest value; the word and the gesture must be informed by the creative and imaginative passion of the play and its producers. Many of the movements in the modern theatre spring from a little understood desire to accomplish the return to imagination. The greater simplicity of stage settings is one sign; another is that rather clumsy substitute for poetry, expressionism. No one acquainted with the theatre in Europe and America can fail to notice that the sumptuous and the materialistic are putting up a fight that means their promotors know their cause is in danger. The lover of the great theatre must be ready with plans for bringing back poetry to the stage: we must work to bring back the poetry of words, of the supreme dramatic poets. That may not be quickly possible, and until it is, poets might help in the restoration of that exquisite poetry of action which is the secret of the marionettes. Illusion is only possible when imitation is abandoned.

RICHARD SUNNE.

TIMBER LABOUR IN RUSSIA

Report on Russian Timber Camps. By SIR ALAN PIM and EDWARD BATESON. Benn. 2s. 6d.

From the circumstance that my morning mails, and subsequently the two-bushel sack which the publicity of my position as a potential legislator compels me to employ in lieu of a standard waste-paper basket, have of late been distended by pamphlets and manifestoes on the subject of forced labour in Russia, I have gathered, since my recent return to England, that there must be a new stunt in progress about the iniquities of the Soviet Government in some quarter of the press which escapes my attention. The burden of these pamphlets has ranged from the sufferings of millions of Russian workers, groaning under a more distressing bondage than that imposed by the Pyramid builders, to the blessings of the operation of Free Trade policy in providing us with a bounteous supply of good cheap Russian deal. In association with the Howard League, the Committee of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, undiscouraged by the refusal of the French at Geneva to entertain the draft Convention against Forced Labour which the society and the British Labour Party had jointly promoted, or by the reluctance of other Governments in the League of Nations to ratify even the approved draft Convention for the suppression of slavery, were moved to take cognisance of the scandals reported about the Russian timber camps and have procured a Report on the basis of an inquiry prosecuted by Sir Alan Pim, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., and Mr. Edward Bateson, formerly a judge of the Egyptian Mixed Tribunals. The Report is careful, conscientious, judicial and cogent. The preface by Lord Buckmaster is, if possible, even more judiciously guarded. He sums up thus:

> That some of the labour in the timber camps is not voluntary is clearly established, but the greater part of it is drawn from people accustomed to work, who work freely and at wages and under conditions fixed after consultation with their Trade Unions. That these wages and conditions are such as no British workman would dream of accepting is certainly true, but it cannot be asserted that they are worse than, or even as bad as, conditions formerly existing in the Russian timber industry.

The gist of the matter, as the reporters point out, is that Russia is living under a dictatorial government. The position corresponds with that of Fascism in Italy. Each Government has established and entrenched itself, with a subordinate ramification of carefully packed vocational and local sub-committees, in a position to carry out certain ideas of policy with entire disregard of the feelings, liberties and accustomed rights of those classes and individuals whose habits of mind and activities it deems to conflict with the principles which inspire its regime. Such classes and individuals are handled with unscrupulous harshness, partly from simple hostility and a desire to destroy or cripple them, partly as a punishment and a lesson, if they are mercifully allowed to survive. These administrative methods are not attractive or sympathetic to the public of civilised countries accustomed to political toleration and liberty, and few Englishmen can observe their operation in Russia, or anywhere else, without feelings of indignation and disgust. Some, indeed, appear to regard their operation in Italy with less disapproval. Possibly that is because, Russia being a less civilised and comfortable country, and the manifest hardship and squalor of the incidents and experiences attendant upon the proceedings—the dirt, hunger and cold—being more aggressively obvious to British sensibilities, there is a tendency to presume that Russians are suffering more than Italians from civil disabilities, persecution, imprisonment and compulsion. The fact probably is, as Lord Buckmaster hints, that, being accustomed to worse conditions, and to chronic official oppression, and being patient, not physically over-sensitive and very kindly to one another in common personal contacts, and because the masses prefer the new to the old regime, Russians actually suffer less from such operations of government than Italians or Tyrolese. Be that as it may, the Soviet methods are odious and appear to most civilised people fanatically insane and malignant. Hence the popularity among humane-minded newspaper readers of anti-Soviet stunts.

The Soviet is pursuing its Five Years Plan for the rationalisation of agriculture and industry on a national Communist basis. In that policy it can safely be said it has the will, or at least the consent, of the Russian community with it. The pursuit of that policy necessitates much official driving and many arbitrary expedients for the mobilisation of labour, so that workers may be drafted wherever the schemes of the Plan require them. Hence gangs of ordinary industrial workers are despatched to work at wages in the exploitation of the great forest resources: on the whole a quite reasonable economic proceeding. This is one of the elements in the alleged forced labour in timber-producing camps. Secondly, the Soviet has determined to "liquidate"—as their euphemistic terminology has it—the institution of capitalised agriculture and to eliminate without compensation, and even with penal disabilities (by way, as I have said, of a warning) all the small farming proprietors; above the wage-labour class, who are known as Kulaks. The Kulaks, some 5,000,000 in numbers, are, as some white South African publicists propose for their intractable natives, to be "exterminated." For "bourgeois" of this class, or for their human sensibilities or necessities, the Soviet has no more consideration than the Fascist Government has for those of an anti-Fascist professor or editor. The Kulaks, deprived of their farms, have to be sent somewhere else to work with their hands. The only places that they can go to are Siberia or other uncolonised forest districts. They swell the working population there, but their labour can hardly be said to be any more forced in its character than that of any other wage worker who has to find a place for employment because he has no other resources. Places are found for them. Thirdly, the Soviet employs its prisoners on public labour outside the prisons. It manufactures an excessive number of convicts, because, on a far vaster scale than the Fascist Government, it condemns political dissidents or those it suspects of disaffection, for example men who have served in the White Russian armies. Accordingly prisoners, criminal or political, have been employed on development work in the forests. The Soviet authorities have denied that any are now employed in cutting timber; but they have certainly been employed in clearing and building roads and railways into the forests, and they have been and probably still are employed in loading ships.

Sir Alan Pim and Mr. Bateson report that in their opinion the conditions imposed upon the Kulaks in timber camps are oppressive, as many of the occupants are unsuited for the type of labour assigned to them, and their exiled state is particularly severe. The Soviet Government intends that this should be severe, to punish the Kulak for having led the immoral life of a small farmer or agricultural produce dealer. They also report that the conditions of labour for the political prisoners were for the same reasons inhumane and oppressive, though "there is no evidence of organised brutality." The Soviet Government intends that its penal conditions shall be deterrent.

The Government, in reply to its critics, very naturally observes that obligation to work for a living is in Russia a national principle, and must if necessary be enforced by the State. Also that compulsory labour in pursuance of the national Five Years Plan is at least as respectable as the compulsory labour of African natives for French concessionaires. The French delegates at Geneva found it impossible to accept the draft Convention against forced labour above referred to, because their Government has contracted for the development of its African territories by concessions in which it is guaranteed that forced labour shall be supplied to the undertakers. The Soviet authorities might also point out that British Colonial laws still authorise native labour to be compulsorily requisitioned when necessary for important public services—for example, railway construction—not more important, in their opinion, than their own Five Years Plan.

OLIVIER.

WILLIAM ARCHER

William Archer: Life, Work, and Friendships. By LIEUT.-COLONEL C. ARCHER. Allen and Unwin. 16s.

All who were friends of William Archer cherish the memory of his presence and manner—which, rather curiously, his brother, the author of this excellent biography, does not describe. He was tall and straight, broad and brown, his look of brown health being completed by a customary suit of brownish tweed. He had a calm and kindly gaze, from eyes set in a wide brow. His soldierly physique owed nothing to athletics. He played no games, and disliked all exercise except walking. He moved and spoke deliberately, although with many small signs of nervousness. He was sensitive and full of humour, brave and generous and altogether sincere. Mr. H. G. Wells, in *Boon*, has a reference to his "very fine face, marred by a look of unscrupulous integrity." That is not the way we should have put it, though it is easy to see what the Wellsian phrase means. Everything in and about William Archer carried the mark of

a noble integrity; and among his contemporaries there were not a few who, knowing his character and accomplishment, were ready to affirm that the age could show no finer example of an English man of letters and affairs.

William Archer was a familiar figure in literary London for forty years. Some people found it odd that a man of his type should be the foremost representative of English dramatic criticism. As a matter of fact it was not odd, but right and inevitable, despite his origins and his family background of Scottish Sandemanianism. Archer had an absorbing sense of the stage. His love for the theatre was ingrained. It was active before he knew what a theatre was. His choice of a profession was not fortuitous: he did what he was born to do. He was, indeed, what most of us mean when we speak of a truly fortunate man. His gifts, his adventures, and his circumstances were alike enviable. His grandparents had settled in Norway, and he himself barely escaped a Norse childhood. His parents, however, returned to Scotland in time, and he passed through school and university in Edinburgh. A short training in Edinburgh journalism, together with a trip to Australia and round the world, preluded Archer's coming south in 1878. The *London Figaro* gave him his first chance in dramatic art criticism, and then came the twenty years during which his weekly article for Edmund Yates's *World* was the main task of his laborious and consistent effort towards a renaissance of the English stage. His work began in a period of deadness and triviality. It quickened up when the early storms broke over Ibsen and the Independent Theatre and over the desperate efforts of the Nineties to create a New Drama. The stage censorship became a live issue, and the project of a National Theatre, to which Archer was always devoted, began to take shape. The record of all this as given by Colonel Archer, with the aid of many entertaining letters, is a valuable reminder of a period when battles of varying moment were waged. Archer fought with tenacity and good temper, always on behalf of a principle and of practical policy. A foolish notion has prevailed that, because he was on the progressive side (as, quaintly enough, was A. B. Walkley), he was a doctrinaire critic, resolved to force the production of "intellectual" or propagandist plays. The opposite is the truth. Archer was interested in the play itself, and in the drama as living literature. The widespread suspicion that he wanted—or even that he wanted first—one particular sort of play was an absurd mistake. He demanded only a live and open theatre. He asked for vivid and actual dialogue, for he was a fully equipped judge of dramatic style. He had, in short, preferences but no exclusions. Mr. Shaw fought for Ibsen because he saw that a victory for the then detested Norwegian would mean the opening of the London stage to plays of social debate and iconoclasm. Archer was on the same side because he held that Ibsen was a great dramatic poet and a master of stage craft. He thought Ibsen childish as a critic of society or a speculative thinker. This is, indeed, the most singular thing about Archer's work for the stage. He was deeply interested in the thought and the wider movements of his time, but he had no wish to have them presented in the thesis play. He claimed that as a critic he had one merit. He always knew when he was bored, and with him to know anything was to declare it.

In later years Archer was amused—a less sweet-tempered man would have been annoyed—by the surprise of the critics over *The Green Goddess*. He quoted with enjoyment the remark of an admired contributor to this journal, to the effect that here was a play of the kind that the author as critic would not have liked. Archer remembered, if the rest had forgotten, that he had begun by experimenting in melodrama. And as long ago as 1903, when protesting against his resistance to the intrusion of problems, Mr. Shaw had written to him, "Blugginess you don't object to—quite the contrary."

But, of course, *The Green Goddess* was fully justified on other grounds. Archer was in his sixty-fifth year when the surprising run of the play began in America. Through the happy collocation of Winthrop Ames as producer and George Arliss as the Raja, it brought an adequate small fortune to the author who, known throughout Europe as the head of his calling, was still, after a lifetime of unremitting toil, serving without complaint for a very modest return. It is doubtful whether any English critic of his time can have produced a body of work so regular and ample in quantity and of equal excellence. It was remarkably informed, intelligent, and readable; but his essays were nearly all for the day. Not the least noteworthy fact about William Archer is that his work as an international publicist is likely to possess a greater permanence than any of his writings on the drama. As the years passed the range of his service was splendidly expanded. He had given Ibsen a place among the classics of our theatre. He was later enabled, by travel and investigation, to illumine one great public question after another, from Afro-America and revolutionary Mexico to the judicial killing of Francisco Ferrer. And he had published anonymously two years before the outbreak of War a wise and prescient plea for a rational world order. Nobody, he said, payed the slightest attention to *The Great Analysis*. In this instance, without doubt, anonymity was a mistake.

S. K. RATCLIFFE.

A DUTCHMAN ON THE ENGLISH

The English: Are They Human? By DR. G. J. RENIER. Williams and Norgate. 7s. 6d.

Dr. Renier, a Dutchman and a historian of merit, has lived in wonder among us for some fifteen years, and now in a book packed with wit and wisdom, tells us of his various and confused sensations. Let it be said at once that this "love-hate" has produced a volume that can be read with unflagging interest at a sitting. How terrible and how true the indictment is! The noisy braggadocio of the daily press, the absence of all intellectual standards, the general lack of aesthetic sensibility, the solicitor who sniggered at the sight of some French novels on a shelf, the prurient puritanism, the ignorance even of one's own ignorance. True, the English are exquisitely courteous and possess a "wistful charm" due to sex repression. But devoid of religion, devoid of culture, indifferent to ideas, contemptuous of thought, the English are the most boring people in the world. Only among the agricultural classes (and here I to a great extent agree with Dr. Renier) can we find an interest in abstract ideas, and any psychological balance.

It is difficult to deny the large truth in a great deal of what Dr. Renier says. We just know that it is true, especially when we look out on what Matthew Arnold in the middle of the nineteenth century called "the Thyestean banquet of clap-trap" which was then mere coffee and rolls to what it has since become. In a brilliantly amusing chapter, "The best in the world," Dr. Renier produces an agonising assortment, from the *Manchester Guardian* to the *Daily Express*, of quotations in which the English laud themselves for the monopoly of all the virtues. But Dr. Renier, having had his fill of hate, is once more full of love. It was not always like this; it need not be like this again. It is all the fault of those public schools, which have invented a ritual of life calculated to prevent English people ever having to be human; and he quotes charming passages from Chaucer onward showing that once upon a time the English were quite human. I quite agree that the public schools have enormously added to an evil, which was already existing. But did not the inhabitants of Miss Austen's novels have a perfectly modern ritual of life? The public schools were hardly going when Mr. John and Mr. George Knightley met, after long separation, at Mr. Woodhouse's and with "How d'ye do, George?" and "John, how are you?" succeeded in true English style in burying under a calmness that seemed all but indifference the real attachment, which would have led either of them, if requisite, to do everything for the good of the other. Still less did the public schools exist in the days when that *Anglomane*, the Comte de Lameth, fled to England, to be revolted, like Dr. Renier, by the coldness of English manners and the inhumanity of English justice. And he lived with the aristocracy. I am inclined to think that English people were always very much like what they are at present, and that this is the reason why intelligent Englishmen have always been such great travellers. At violent war against the conventions, the intelligent Englishman has never become tamed or happy. Unless you are as eccentric as Rimbaud, the French *douceur de vivre* will cut your claws. But the English have always exploded into genius, grown wild with eccentricity. Dr. Renier tends to overlook our eccentricity. That the phrase "Der Verrückte Engländer" has some meaning I know from the hearty laughter which my modest person has occasioned in most European countries. Not for nothing I believe did the "Comedy of Humours" come to its finest flowering in England. The plays of Ben Jonson describe a society that seems very like our own.

Dr. Renier is harassed by what is known as British humour. "the saving grace of humour" to which politicians in a mess are continually referring. Dr. Renier who, being a foreigner, takes things seriously, is at once puzzled and disgusted. Certainly the

frivolity of the English is an odious characteristic and leads to a particularly vapid form of conceit. The English laugh at anything. They find everything ridiculous: art, thought, religion, morals, culture. They grin out on to the world through a horse collar. But the eccentricity of the few, combined with the frivolity of the mass, leads to a tolerance which Dr. Renier does not much admire. Perhaps if I may add one to his many "mosts," "The English are the most good-natured people in the world, for they do not feel sufficiently strongly to get angry about anything." Anthony Trollope is really the English Flaubert, less interesting to study, but considerably easier to live with. As Dr. Renier truly says, "It is in Paris that one becomes most aware of the virtues of the English," and such a severe critic as M. Siegfried has provided a "most" and said that the English are the "most civilised nation in the world." When the moment comes, he thinks the public schools will have a 4th of August off their own bat; that is if any one wants to ask them for it. And meanwhile Dr. Renier, despite everything, is quite content to go on living in England. Their books are very bad, their music still second rate, their painting, at the best, an intelligent imitation of the French, their architecture still almost entirely barbarous; the theatre is stifled by a Censor; their laws are theocratic; most of the men are frigid; most of the women fools. They adore animals because, like themselves, animals cannot talk. Why live in such a country? And then to be insulted as an Anglomaniac when you return to Holland! Evidently Dr. Renier keeps a mistress, whom no one may criticise but himself. However the English will be very well advised to read Dr. Renier's book, and perhaps Dr. Renier will write a second explaining exactly in what the charm of his mistress consists. Being born an Englishman, I am very content to go on living in England, granted that I can get away for an occasional holiday. But had I not been born in England, I do not think that I should have come to live here. Dr. Renier should really try to justify what seems from his book an unintelligent and unintelligible preference.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

"PEOPLE! PEOPLE!"

The Magnet. By MAXIM GORKI. Cape. 15s.

If the third volume of Gorki's trilogy should be as long as its predecessors the whole will be almost equal to *War and Peace*, with *An American Tragedy* thrown in. Whether anyone will succeed in grasping the trilogy as Gorki sees it is doubtful. *The Magnet* repeats the motif-phrases familiar to readers of *The Bystander*, and gives us passages which are clearly intended to balance others in the earlier volume; but in spite of the formality of the pattern it seems likely that the completed work will fail to prove itself an artistic whole—and that not because of the variety and complexity of the minor characters and minor themes, which might well be expected to distract from the significance of the major character and the major theme, but because of the thinness and lack of intensity in the character and the theme to which all else is clearly intended to be subordinate. Clym Samghin in the first volume of the trilogy was a looker-on at life, a boy who feared people, disliked them, was bored by them. In the second volume he is, nearly all the time, equally bored. The magnet draws him on, but can scarcely be said to draw him in. He remains, fundamentally, a bystander, exasperated by "people."

He is himself a singularly unsympathetic character. He makes some shrewd psychological reflections now and again, but it is impossible to like him or to be interested in him—except as in someone who may develop later into something that has not yet been manifested. It is as though Gorki had tried to thread a thousand gleaming jewels on a wire so dry and rusty that it crumbles at their touch, rolling them hither and thither in confusion. There is no doubt whatever about the brilliancy of the beads. In every chapter we find some vivid gleam. Here are three minor characters given us with a high light on one facet: the old servant who, on Easter morning, "looked in her wide dress rather like a small chapel"; a young priest who "spoke of the deceased mysteriously, and with jubilance, as of somebody who had just performed a very praiseworthy deed," and the "well-groomed man with a bare cranium like a great ugly baroque pearl" who believed that "the poor could live quite comfortably if they bred rabbits." Nearly all the descriptions have a similar vividness. At times, however, Gorki seems to overreach himself in his attempt to hit off a peculiarity in a few strokes. This is specially the case where eyes are concerned. The eyes of his characters fuse into figures of eight; separate and resume their proper places; suck; have golden pupils; float in yellow tears like gooseberries in treacle; and, perhaps, most surprisingly of all, radiate such warmth that they impel observers to touch them with a finger. Probably some of the queerness is due to the fact that the book is translated by a Russian into the American language with which, apparently, he is imperfectly acquainted. "The columnist had been wise-cracking" may, or may not, be good American, but such phrases as "the moon, properly circular" and "Kozlov existed by trading" would seem to be at home in no language.

The Magnet, it may be explained, in conclusion, is the Revolution, and the period covered is that from the coronation of the last Tsar to the "bloody Sunday" of January, 1905. Doubtless far more readers will be interested in Gorki's picture of this devastating period of Russian history than in his artistic aim. Those who are not interested in history may derive enjoyment from a desultory turning of *The Magnet's* many pages for the sake of Gorki's shrewd psychology, and still more for the vivid Forain-like quality of his descriptions.

THE ARABIAN DESERT

Alarms and Excursions in Arabia. By BERTRAM THOMAS. Allen and Unwin. 15s.

While many explorers have penetrated to the remotest parts of Central Asia and Africa, and even to the regions about the North and South Poles, Arabia, a country which lies closely surrounded by the scenes of the great ancient and modern civilisations, has remained largely unknown. This is, however, changing. The War has had the effect of putting Arabia in a more important place in the sphere of international politics than it ever occupied before, and an incidental result of this is that certain Europeans have enjoyed unprecendented opportunities of extending our knowledge of that insular country. It is no longer necessary for the favoured European traveller to become outwardly an Oriental and to live among the people precisely as one of themselves. Burton, Palgrave, and Doughty, lone wanderers travelling with nothing but their own resourcefulness to rely upon, have given place to Mr. Philby and Mr. Thomas, men holding official positions and travelling with an escort provided by the Ruler of the country. The risks and dangers have diminished, but they have by no means disappeared. Incidentally, Mr. Thomas does justice to the memory of Palgrave. It was high time that somebody said a good word for the author of that fascinating book, *Central and Eastern Arabia*.

The geographical features of Northern and Central Arabia are now laid down with fair accuracy in our maps, as the result of the information gained by Charles Doughty and Mr. H. St. J. Philby. Southern Arabia, however, with the exception of the actual coast-line, still remains to a great extent unknown. To the author of

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Alarms and Excursions in Arabia has fallen the honour of resolving some of the questions concerning the southern parts of the Peninsula which have long exercised the minds of geographers. His latest and greatest exploit is the crossing of the Rub'a al Khali, the great southern desert, from the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf. In this book he deals with adventures and journeys which, though of less importance, will be of extreme interest, not only to students of Arabia, but to all who like an authentic narrative of travel and adventure told in a crisp and breezy style.

The book is compounded of five separate incidents, two of which occurred in Mesopotamia, where Mr. Thomas was a political officer, and the other three in and about the Sultanate of Oman, an independent State in the south-eastern extremity of Arabia, where he holds the office of Finance Minister to the Sultan. His position gave him the advantage of several years' residence amongst the scenes of his adventures, and he has made magnificent use of his opportunities. The first episode in the book deals with a punitive expedition against one of the sheikhs of the Muntafiq during the war. The Muntafiq were thorns in the side of British and Turks alike, attaching themselves to whichever army appeared to them to have the upper hand at the moment. One of their sheikhs, however, Badr ar Rumaiyidh, remained loyal to the Turks throughout the vicissitudes of the campaign. The author tells the story of how Badr was finally forced to surrender nearly a year after the Armistice. His narrative includes a vivid description of the marsh country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, which the Muntafiq inhabit. The second episode is concerned with the insurrection of 1920, when as political officer at Shatrah, Mr. Thomas found himself in a position of some danger. His masterly handling of Sheikh Khaiyyun, and the account of the events which preceded his eleventh-hour rescue by aeroplane from the disaffected village, fill the most exciting pages of the book.

The concluding chapters describe briefly a journey through the coastal districts between Suwaih and Dhufar, south-west of Muscat. This sketch is somewhat slight, and the book comes to an end rather vaguely with the author still somewhere in the desert of Dhufar.

Mr. Thomas's book is one which will be read by everybody interested in Arabia, and I recommend it to anyone who appreciates narratives of travel in countries still beyond the sphere of the tourist-office. The style is somewhat clipped in parts, and where this occurs the book is not easy reading. The descriptions of scenery are admirable. The illustrations are good, but the map on page 31 has been reduced to such an extent that some of the names can only be made out with difficulty.

ELDON RUTTER.

by Barnaby Brook

MOCK TURTLE

R. Ellis Roberts says :

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—The London Mercury.

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"Amongst writers of any kind there is none more conspicuously first in his own subject: And that subject is the greatest of all games (cricket)."
—J. L. Garvin (Observer).

HUMPHREY TOULMIN.

A STOIC'S FAREWELL TO MANCHESTER

Farewell Manchester. By ALLAN MONKHOUSE. Secker. 7s. 6d.

Lancashire offers no such nondescript background for a book as the Five Towns: most of the time as inarticulate, she is more obstructive to the men who try to express her spirit. Bernard Shaw has the easy speech of Ireland behind him, as well as Elizabethan English and Fabian logic, and Mr. Galsworthy is never as much as a day's journey from the sane and lovely West Country. Lancashire has always refused to be written about and it has taken the joint work of Mr. Monkhouse and the cotton slump to overcome her stubbornness. He has coupled the industrial crisis with a tragic family event which eclipses it and which speeds up realisation of the incommensurable factors in a world "run mad." For the first time in a history of glum loyalties these Lancashire people, like soldiers in the War, are forced to ask "to what are we loyal?" They find their individual solutions. John Henry Tunstall, a cotton manufacturer, who is the central figure in the book, solves his problem by trying to use his imagination, now that "hanging on" and "choosing the best out of the obvious" no longer bring success. Mrs. Tunstall, a sceptic and an aristocrat, who evidently belongs to the eighteenth century, can at last embrace without self-ridicule the traditional role of the staunch wife. Laura, their daughter, can bring a humanising warmth to the house and a willingness to appreciate everybody's problems—even those of her brothers. Of the boys, Walter is fundamentally religious. Absorbed in a secret conflict between Roman Catholicism and profane love, he once, with horrible results, fails to control his atavistic passions. Afterwards he cannot forgive himself and psychological knowledge does not help him; prison is the least of his trials, he must expiate his sin. Jack Tunstall's line is not so intelligible. Ostensibly an ex-soldier with no particular beliefs, who has missed Cambridge, he goes first into the business out of loyalty to his father, and then, from a similar impulse, gives up his girl, whom Walter also loved, and goes to the Antipodes to make a new home for his disgraced brother. Jack's last sacrifice reads like an escape; he was never convincing as a lover, and he would be thankful, one suspects, to get clear from the Chowburn atmosphere, so deadly to infant ideas, with its fog, its common sense, its ugliness and its vague humanitarianism. This may be a misinterpretation; but Jack seems always a little out of focus—he is not so much a familiar brotherly figure as something volcanic, compacted of doubts and driving through the family to unseen ends. Walter's outburst is a genuine tragedy beside which the industrial impasse seems insignificant. But one could wish that Mr. Monkhouse had let himself go a little more about the feelings and ideas of the crowd. Such touches as he does put in, about the cricket match, for instance, about the rowdy meeting and the red-headed slut whose dismissal started the strike (she and Mr. Gandhi ranked equal in the employers' sight, as twin wreckers of Chowburn's sober world!) are both shrewd and amusing. Mr. Monkhouse's canvas is never as broad as Arnold Bennett's, but he can be as observant. In giving Lancashire her rights he has less of an artist's enjoyment; but he is something of a philosopher, a stoic who participates even while he judges, one who is able to be fair to ideas as well as to people.

THE HOUSE OF FRIENDS

The Mercury Book of Verse. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

As an anthology of poems, *The Mercury Book of Verse* is like a handful of pebbles gathered, not altogether at random, from the shore. And if, among these, only one or two may have the purity and radiance of crystals, and only a few more the curious, delicate convolutions of sea-shells, at least we may be certain the rest are pleasant, cool stones, washed smooth and round by the sea.

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and show us their well-remembered loves of the last eleven years. One cannot do better, to illustrate the spirit of the book, than quote from Mr. Binyon's "The House that Was," for as we read we are indeed shown again and again

> What once was firelit floor and private charm
> Where, seen in a windowed picture, hills were fading
> At dusk, and all was memory-coloured and warm,
> And voices talked, secure from the wind's invading.

But friends too often partake of the same pleasures and subscribe to the same point of view, however subtly the personality of each one may transmute the manner of approach. The book, therefore, suffers from the defects of its virtues; for, although an opal may hold many colours in its depths, it is still the same opal and the range of its changing lights is not inexhaustible. There is a monotony which comes from a definite standard and a tradition firmly adhered to, and, with a few exceptions, these poems seldom touch either heights or depths of spiritual experience.

But, as Sir Henry Newbolt says in his Introduction, *The Mercury Book of Verse* is the outcome of a beneficent and unusual attitude towards poetry. *The London Mercury* is one of the few journals which actually seek for poetry, and publish it month by month, not as a hole-and-corner affair, but abundantly, several poems by several poets in each number: and two hundred of the poems published between the years 1919–1930 are reprinted here. Necessarily there are some which are already well known, partly from their inclusion in other anthologies; but finding them in a new setting, among their friends, we find fresh beauties hidden in them. Of such are Mr. J. C. Squire's "Late Snow," both from sound and sense one of the most delicate of his poems; Mr. Belloc's graceful epigram "On a Dead Hostess," and the mournfully lovely "On a Sleeping Friend"; D. H. Lawrence's "Snake"; Hardy's "A Glimpse from the Train"; and Mr. de la Mare's haunted and haunting poem "The Suicide." There are also many new or lesser-known poems, which are in the same tradition, and it is surely certain that from these the reader will make at least one new friend amongst the host of new acquaintances. He may find in Mr. Aiken's "Battersea Bridge," or Mr. Duncan Scott's "Permanence," or Mr. Abbott's "Stallion" the words he has been waiting for; or meet afresh in Mrs. Lynd's "A Fine Night in December" the too rarely encountered transparency and fluid water-music of her verse.

NEXT THURSDAY

The Thief

SECKER

SHORTER NOTICES

A Yankee in Patagonia. By ROBERT and KATHARINE BARRETT. Heffer. 12s. 6d.

From Panama to Patagonia. By CHARLES W. TOWNSEND. Witherby. 12s. 6d.

Although its development as one of the great sheep-farming areas of the world has been largely in British hands, Patagonia is still probably the least known to us of all South American countries. Mr. and Mrs. Barrett are Americans, and it was during a visit to Patagonia that they met their fellow countryman Edward Chace, whose stirring life they here record. Chace landed in Patagonia in 1898 when sheep-farming was already firmly established and the parcelling out of the land into large and small estancias was well on the way, and he lived there for thirty years working on the farms of such pioneers as Monroe and Blake, both experienced farmers from the Falklands, and on his own account. It is not, however, the steady progress of a great industry that he records, but the adventurous life of the pampas, the driving of great flocks to the ports, the encounters with "lions" (puma), and with Indians, half-breeds, and the flotsam and jetsam of humanity that moved up and down the country or congregated in the ports. Mr. Townsend's book is in another and more ordinary category. It is the story of a sea trip along the west coast of South America from Panama to the Straits of Magellan, and thence round Patagonia north to Rio, and its appeal is to the tourist, especially the American tourist. Mr. Townsend writes agreeably of the places he visited, often a considerable distance inland, and he has many hints for intending visitors that are both useful and practicable. To Patagonia there is very little reference, but sufficient to show that there is little as yet in the country to attract the casual visitor.

Clive. By R. J. MINNEY. Jarrolds. 16s.

"Sickness smote the smile of Christmas from the pale lips of the little, brown-headed boy." Whoso has the courage to read on, will, when he has recovered from such a sentence, find this life of Clive both interesting and accurate history. Young historians seem unable to avoid imitating Mr. Lytton Strachey except by copying Mr. Hackett, and biography has been cured of dullness and dryness, only to fall a victim to the hiccups. Once the reader has accepted Mr. Minney's style—as a stutter must be accepted before the conversation of the so-afflicted can be appreciated—then the many excellent qualities of his book may be perceived. There are admirable descriptions of mid-eighteenth century England, and the account of the intrigues leading up to Plassey, and of those which prefaced Clive's third visit to India, are as absorbing as the most dramatic accounts of the happenings before the Crimean or the Franco-Prussian Wars. The story of Clive's climbing of Market Drayton Tower, his reply to the official to whom he had to apologise for insubordination, the Fordyce incident, the taking of Dovicolah, all help to explain the peculiar charm of this Lieutenant-Governor of India. Mr. Minney defends his hero for forging Admiral Watson's signature to the dummy treaty with Omichand by a statement which is, alas! only too true: "It is difficult, in an age that has seen Britain overcome her conscientious scruples against poison gas and the bombing of civilians, for Clive's 'gloves off' morality to be condemned with either sincerity or conviction. He resorted merely to the poison gas of the country and the era. His directors neither condemned nor criticised him for what he had done: they benefited and so eventually did the British nation." And Clive paid most bitterly for the wrong he did—no worldly hopes ever turned to bitterer ashes.

Rousseau. By C. E. VULLIAMY. Bles. 10s. 6d.

One cannot make a study of Voltaire without touching on Rousseau, and no author with a proper sense of thrift and economy will limit his activities to one bird when he can hit two with virtually the same weapon of research. Mr. Vulliamy, whose biography of Voltaire appeared some months ago, would seem to have argued on these lines, with an eye to the fitness of companion volumes, in producing the present book. There is no avoiding the feeling that his urge is economic—in the wider sense of the term—rather than creative. Certainly condensation rather than exploration is his aim. He brings no new facts and no new theories (which latter is as well) to bear on his subject, nor does he plunge into deep investigation of either the origin or influence of Rousseau's philosophy, and its connection with the world he lived in. No doubt Mr. Vulliamy's limitation of his matter is deliberate. He has set out to write a popular, direct and unbiassed résumé of his author's life and works, which serves its purpose as a sound and readable introduction to a complex personality.

Birds of Jesmond Dene. By SIR GEORGE NOBLE. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 15s.

As the narrow valley of Jesmond Dene, slowly being trapped into a *rus in urbe* by expanding Newcastle, lies in the path of autumnal and vernal migration, it might be expected that a bird-watcher's record of visitors, extending as does this by Sir George Noble over more than half a century, would emphasise rarities rather than the great variety of more common birds. But this volume is the work of a man who is more an enthusiast than a specialist; and were it not for a display of scientific nomenclature, it might be taken for a pleasant collection of jottings by one who has leisure enough to be a purely æsthetic bird-watcher. The author has confined his record to include only those birds he has seen actually in the Dene itself and he enlivens his references with many delightful anecdotes of nesting habits, preying, and the like. While the volume is hardly

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a valuable addition to an ornithologist's library, it is so pleasantly and unpretentiously written that it should display its greatest charms to the more unscientific among bird lovers.

Cleopatra: A Royal Voluptuary. By OSKAR VON WERTHEIMER. Harrap. 12s. 6d.

Neither history nor historical novel, but a hybrid without the prime virtues of either, Wertheimer's *Cleopatra* belongs to a class of book popular at the moment, which is peculiarly irritating to those, whether scholars or general readers, who having a sense of the past desire to preserve its integrity. Yet in its way, Hollywood's way, the thing is not badly done. Here is Cleopatra, as very likely the commoner sort talked of her in Alexandria, and Tarsus, Jerusalem and Rome, sketched in strong crude colours for the multitude; the material for a great spectacular film, with bizarre naughtinesses tempered by moral asides, and events of world-wide importance leading to emotional close-ups. It is a vulgarisation rather than a distortion of history to which we are subjected. The facts are there, but their implications are seen as petty and personal rather than important and general. The book is well illustrated.

About Motoring

BROOKLANDS MOTOR TRACK

THE late Mr. Locke-King expended about £250,000 on Brooklands motor track. In conversation with me some years ago he confessed to a double motive. He wished to provide the British motor industry with an open-air laboratory in which it could develop its cars up to world-beating standards; and he further intended to furnish a sporting spectacle of such enthralling interest as should insure a handsome interest on his capital outlay. His first ambition has proved a brilliant success. It was at Brooklands that the engineering brains of this nation first grasped the secret capacities of the petrol engine in respect of power and speed. Theoretically, engines could have been developed elsewhere and by other means; but it is doubtful whether manufacturers would ever have faced the necessary research in the shops unless Brooklands had forced them to realise the advertising value of sheer speed. A very small minority of our professional engineers, enthusiastically supported and even led by keen amateurs, exploited the possibilities of Brooklands. Speed was discovered to possess magnificent publicity value. The laboratory importance of Brooklands has probably passed. To-day engines are developed elsewhere. The Napier Lion and Rolls-Royce engines, which are the real keys to the feats of Waghorn, Segrave, Don and Campbell, were never track engines; they originated during the war in the quest for aeroplane engines to face the German squadrons. Their subsequent development has been worked out on the bench. The main importance of Brooklands at the moment is mainly commercial, and turns on its advertising power.

As a spectacle Brooklands has always been a tolerably complete failure. At the very first meeting a bookmaker was heard to exclaim, "Look at the blinking little beetles creeping round the sanguinary saucer!" He put the showman's case against Brooklands in a nutshell. It is so vast that a car travelling at over 100 m.p.h. may create less impression of speed than an ancient Ford overdriven down some rural lane. The Italian track at Monza and the French track at Montléry, though far better designed from the spectacular point of view, suffer from the same intrinsic handicap. You must have space for safety at high speeds; and space dwarfs the car and impoverishes the spectacle. At the London dirt tracks speeds of 50 m.p.h. are not attained; yet the suggestion of speed is far more impressive. Moreover, Brooklands track is not particularly accessible. Weybridge is some distance from town and stands amidst a thin population; its communications are not good. If the track had been as well served by public transport as Wembley, it would give the showman a better chance. In addition, the local residents quite pardonably object to noise; and terrific noise is a great asset to the showman, as dirt tracks are proving.

Until quite recent days the track management was completely uninspired from the spectacular standpoint. Entrance was difficult. Egress was worse. The racing was apt to be monotonous. The visitor had to tramp considerable distances in order to vary his view of the sport, to obtain refreshments, and to reach sanitary accommodation. Prices were high, because the management despaired of its power to increase the gate. Nowadays a new clerk of the course is displaying vision and making experiments, so that a Brooklands meeting is far more convenient and exciting than it used to be; some 40,000 people attended the track on Whit-Monday last. But when all is said and done it remains doubtful whether it is in the power of any man to make Brooklands a great show place. It numbers a small clientele, who pay the ridiculously high membership fees and attend with tolerable regularity. In addition each meeting attracts a small fringe of first comers; but few of these feel inspired to repeat the experimental visit at regular intervals. For many of them the journey to the track represents a tolerable exertion and a certain expense. They get somewhat footweary as they pad about the giant arena to place their bets, to view the racing from different standpoints, to obtain refreshment, and so on. They are probably entangled in a queue as they enter the track, and in a far worse queue as they leave it. On a sunny day the giant saucer is converted into a burning glass, as the sandy soil reflects the heat; on a bad day it can be one of the wettest and coldest places in England. The circling of cars round a vast saucer is apt to be a monotonous spectacle, though it is occasionally relieved by races which utilise only a part of the track, diversified by improvised sand banks. Thrilling racing is not necessarily spectacular, for at 100 miles an hour victory by thirty seconds spells victory by three-quarters of a mile, so that the task of the handicapper is unenviable. If Mr. Cochran undertook the management of the track, aided by plenty of capital, he would have to accept very limited objectives; it is doubtful whether anybody can convert Brooklands into a really popular resort.

Nevertheless, no motorist's education is complete until he has paid at least one visit to the track; and whether he returns or not, the sheer novelty of the sport and all its equipment insures the complete success of the first visit, assuming that the weather is kind. This first visit is so interesting that it justifies a journey by road from distant counties—Westmoreland or Cornwall. The majority of visitors will not trouble to repeat the experiment more than once a year, or even more than once in five years. But a small percentage will be thrilled, and desire to attend every meeting which is blessed with a fine day; and young people always relish the fare provided. I have no great hopes for the future of the track; but I strongly commend the first visit, which should preferably be made with a large car full of young people, and be based on picnic meals.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

THE URIC ACID QUESTION.

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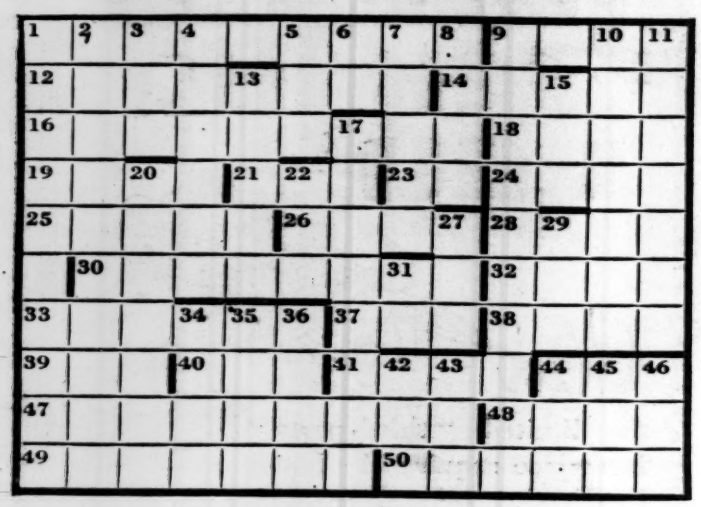


MY DEAR WATSON.

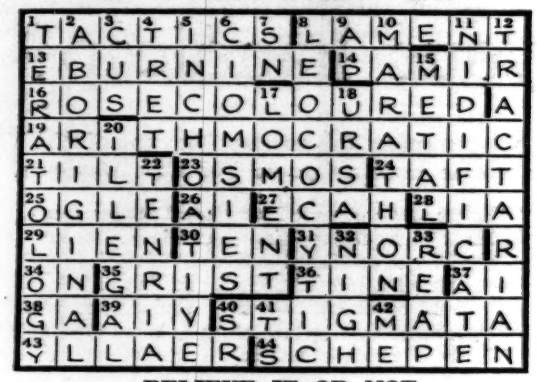
ACROSS

1. Potent, though I jingle no more.
9. 26 assumes a wooden appearance.
12. Friendly but with a rocky interior.
14. Where one poor lion had no Christian.
16. Mr. Gumbril's trousers.
18. Pronouncements of babes and sucklings.
19. Eve got her teeth into me.
21. Singular Mr. Cinders.
23. Cæsar's himself again.
24. Every gauntlet has a silver lining.
25. Where the bats come from.
26. See 9 *Across*.
28. Almost a heroine.
30. College that the " House " might have been.
32. What the frieze looked like in the mirror.
33. A very palpable — thruster.
37. My greatness is a thing of the past.
38. What the fog does.
39. How yesterday began.
40. League of notions.
41. Not quite the deuce.
44. What Alice became, she was too.
47. Confusion in an autocrat of the lower deck.
48. A list to port in the Rue de la Paix.
49. Cut the leaves, and reverse.
50. The city is apparently only a cart-track.

DOWN

1. Turns putrefaction to life.
2. Roger Bacon and Count Fosco were.
3. Life in Montparnasse.
4. Invert and grow thin.
5. Reverse your affectionate reference to Mr. Lincoln.
6. Initials of a prominent figure in the counter-Reformation.
7. Ghost of 33 *Across*.
8. Our curate is quate this.
9. The less popular type of cave-man.
10. 47 *Across* is an example.
11. A distant prospect in Greece.
13. Topsy-turvy play.
15. One of our " bright little contemporaries."
17. Wrestled for the body of Alkestis.
20. Some advice to a drunkard has just turned up.
22. Makes good progress in Norway.
27. One of the things that a Babbit likes to be.
29. Reverse 40 *Across* and get an expression of dislike.
31. Found in 1 *Across*.
34. 5 *Down* split me upwards ; his most famous predecessor could not be me.
35. Return of Mr. Turpin from York.
36. Lancaster's was a coloured one.
42. Between the fish and the bull.
43. Spouse of the preceding.
44. D.V.8.
45. While enjoying 3 *Down*, we have lost our tail.
46. The ghost of Hamlet's father found Hamlet to be this.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



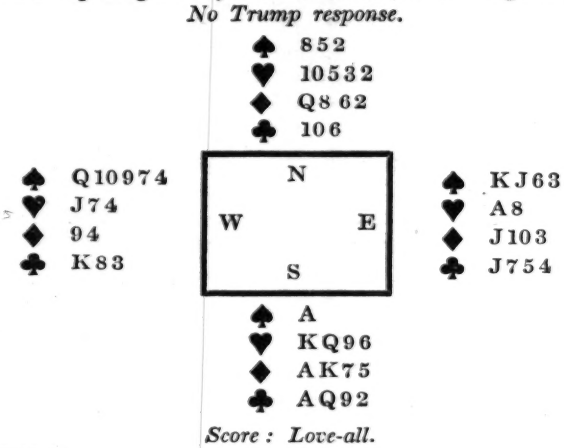
BELIEVE IT OR NOT

BRIDGE

By CALIBAN.

HOW TO BID AT CONTRACT: A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIVE HANDS.

No. XI. Opening Bid of Two in a Suit, with " negative " Two No Trump response.



Score : Love-all.

The Bidding :

South	2 ♦	3 N.T.
West	No Bid	No Bid
North	2 N.T.	No Bid
East	No Bid	No Bid

Notes on the Bidding :

South has an enormous hand—5½ Honour Tricks. Game is almost certain, whatever North holds. South *might*, therefore, make some pre-emptive bid for game (*e.g.*, Three No Trumps). But this would deprive him of the opportunity of learning what cards North holds. On the other hand, if he opens with a mere bid of One, it is almost certain that no one else will say anything, and a probable game will be thrown away.

Moreover, if North has anything at all, there is a strong chance of slam, if the right bid for the combined hands can be found.

It was to meet this situation that Ely Culbertson invented the " Forcing Two Bid." An opening bid of Two in a Suit (*not* of Two No Trumps) " obligates " a response. It says to partner : " I have a very powerful hand. If you have anything to show me, let me know about it. But, *in any case*, the bidding must be kept alive."

North has nothing to show. Hence his negative or " denial " bid of Two No Trumps. This is the only purely " conventional " bid in the Forcing System. And a moment's reflection will show that, even so, there is nothing risky about it.

South will go back to a suit if he thinks it desirable, knowing he cannot count on any support from North.

His hand, however, is in this case strong enough for him to take a chance on Three No Trumps.

Against any lead but a Spade, North makes the contract.

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